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by

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**Using Multimedia to Teach French Language and Culture**

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# **Using Multimedia to Teach French Language and Culture**

**by**

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## **Report**

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## **Dedication**

To all French learners, may you have fun along the process of learning this language!

## **Acknowledgements**

I would like to thank all of you who have made this career switch to French teaching possible, in particular my professors at UT - Dr. Blyth, Dr. Horwitz, Dr. Sardegna, Dr. Pulido, Dr. Schallert, and Dr. Tissières - and all my friends in Foreign Language Education.

I also wish to thank my husband Roland and my two sons Théo and Marius for their help and support during the past two years.

## **Abstract**

### **Using Multimedia to Teach French Language and Culture**

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The University of Texas at Austin, 2012

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In order for the study of French to survive in American higher education, it will be necessary to adopt a pedagogy that motivates learners as well as teaches them both language and culture. I argue that the judicious use of visual materials (film, video and graphic novels) is ideal for this undertaking. I further assert—based upon numerous sources from fields such as Second Language Acquisition, cognitive psychology, anthropology and sociolinguistics--that language and culture are inseparable, and that visual materials provide the necessary context to facilitate the teaching of both. Visual materials present both problems and opportunities. I discuss such difficulties as cognitive overload (i.e., students' being overwhelmed by too much information in too short a period of time) and suggest practical solutions. I also present criteria for the selection of films, such as appropriateness, learning goals and appeal to US university students. I also show how authentic media such as video can be adapted for all proficiency levels (e.g., assigning beginners' simple word recognition tasks). In considering graphic

novels, I suggest a familiar comic strip, *Tintin*, which is appropriate for beginning to advanced students, and which is likely to appeal to all students, given its American film adaptation. In the appendices, I include applications of the points presented in this report. In the conclusion, I argue that, regardless of the length formal instruction in French, this pedagogy can support practical skills (for example, dealing with people from other cultures) and lifelong learning (for example, staying involved with French culture through the aforementioned media).

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## Introduction

In this report, I propose ways to teach French as a foreign language with multimedia—films, videos and *bandes dessinées* [French graphic novels]. Using materials that will attract and motivate students is especially important for those promoting the teaching of French for several reasons: 1) English has become the economic and cultural lingua franca. It is the language of globalization. Even in France and other Francophone countries, proficiency in English is essential to communicate with those speaking other languages. 2) Students in English-speaking countries are less likely to study foreign languages. In the UK, in August, 2011, the BBC<sup>1</sup> reported a 22% drop in the numbers of teenagers taking foreign languages at GCSE<sup>2</sup> between 2006 and 2011. French enrollments dropped more than those of any other foreign language: the number of French exam entries fell 29% in that short time period. In the US, the situation is quite similar<sup>3</sup>. 3) Spanish is, by far, the most popular foreign language in the US. It is hardly surprising that those students choosing to learn a foreign language overwhelmingly choose Spanish. Spanish has become the unofficial second language of the US, and, given the size of Hispanic communities nationwide, knowledge of Spanish is increasingly important in all areas of American life. This is certainly the case in those states, such as Texas, that share a border with Mexico. Consequently,

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1 <http://www.bbc.co.uk/news/education-14666229>

<sup>2</sup>In the UK, the GCSE or the General Certificate of Secondary Education is the equivalent of an end of High School Diploma in the US (TASK in Texas or the SAT/CAT for college entry). It replaces the old O-levels and A-levels and may soon be replaced by the English Baccalaureate Certificate.

3 <http://www.forbes.com/sites/collegeprose/2012/08/27/americas-foreign-language-deficit/>

it has become harder to attract university students to the French language, even those who have a mandatory language requirement to fulfill.

Given the factors cited above, French instructors in American higher education are increasingly faced with fewer students, and less motivation on the part of those who do enroll in their classes.

The question, then, is how will the study of French survive in the US? I suggest that instructors adopt a more engaging pedagogy, relying heavily on visual materials, such as films, video and bandes dessinées. The utilization of films and other multimedia is consonant with the notion of communicative language teaching (CLT). CLT favors “interaction among learners, opportunities to use language in seeking and exchanging information, and less attention to learning metalinguistic rules or memorizing dialogues and practicing patterns (Spada and Lightbown, 2008).

## Chapter 1 - What Do We Teach?

In this chapter, I review and discuss the content of foreign-language instruction. I attempt to define what teaching a foreign language means. This paper is informed by research in areas as diverse as second language acquisition, cognitive psychology, anthropology and sociology.

### ACTFL STANDARDS

In 1993, a task force was convened to define content standards, delineating what students should know about and be able to do with a foreign language (FL) (Standards for Foreign Language Learning, 2006). The standards were developed by the American Council on the Teaching of Foreign Languages (ACTFL), the leading US organization advocating the teaching and learning of foreign languages. The task force identified five goal areas: Communication, Cultures, Connections, Comparisons, and Communities—the five C's of FL education.

The five C's are defined as follows:

- 1) *Communication* is about face-to-face and written language study, and literature.
- 2) FL students should master the *cultures* of the target language they study.
- 3) FL students have *connections* to new bodies of knowledge. These new connections are unavailable to monolingual English speakers.
- 4) FL students can establish *comparisons* between the language and the culture they study and their own, so they can realize that there are multiple ways of viewing the world
- 5) FL students can participate in multilingual *communities*.

The standards address issues broader than those traditionally associated with language learning (i.e., what to say [vocabulary] and how to say it [grammar]). They also stress communicating in meaningful and culturally appropriate ways.

The linguistic anthropologist Michael Agar (1994) has asserted that communication involves more than language. In fact, in Agar's view, the worst misunderstandings often arise from a cultural background difference, even when people speak the same language. Language, then, is a social object and cannot be separated from the culture of the target language community. And, effective communication involves much more than the information found in textbooks and dictionaries. Teaching culture is not just about cultural facts (e.g. when the Eiffel Tower was built) and cultural products (e.g. French films). It is about teaching a deep understanding of the beliefs and values underlying the target language communities.

#### **CAN WE SEPARATE CULTURE AND LANGUAGE?**

Researchers often make a distinction between culture and language. It is a convenient distinction and seems logical in the light of most textbook organization. However, if we look at the internal structure of a language, it can be hard to distinguish culture from linguistic structure or grammar.

If we look at vocabulary in language teaching, for example, we see that there are many aspects of knowing a word, most of which cannot be learned from dictionaries. For many words we can distinguish the basic fundamental meaning of a word from cultural background knowledge aspects:

- a) Extension and intension meaning (Lyons, 1977, as cited in Schmitt, 2000)

- b) Denotation and connotation (Hammerley, 1979, as cited in Schmitt, 2000)
- c) Definitional and contextual information (Stahl, 1983, as cited in Schmitt, 2000)
- d) Basic and abstract domain (McCarthy, 1990, as cited in Schmitt, 2000)
- e) Core meaning and encyclopedic knowledge (Katz and Fodor, 1963, as cited in Schmitt, 2000)

In semantics, we like to analyze the meaning of words through lexical decomposition or prototyping, but semantic features can be very different from one culture to another. Let's do the basic linguistics exercise of decomposing a lexeme into semantic features. In French *lapin* (rabbit) would be categorized as edible but not as a pet. The same word in English, *rabbit*, would be semantically classified as not edible and as a pet, for most American people in any case. If we now look at prototyping, we might get very different answers depending on who we ask to define the same words. For example, if we ask someone from Arizona what would the classic prototype of a bird, the answer might be "an eagle" (Antes, 2007). In France, the answer to the same question might be "une hirondelle" (a swallow). In Australia, it might be "an ostrich".

The basic meaning of a word can be culturally loaded indeed. The connotation of a word is part of its meaning but it can be very difficult to learn without the help of someone who knows the culture very well. A simple word association activity can unveil totally different meanings for two words that appeared to be cognates at first glance. Word association activities are excellent to teach word meaning, because collocation is a powerful organizing feature that complements the meaning of a word. Additionally, word association can generate interesting cultural discussions because words are organized in the mental lexicon in a similar manner among native-speakers of the same language (Schmitt, 2000). This means that syntagmatic and paradigmatic responses for word association for French speakers are



common but may be different than the responses from American people. For example, in French the word *individualisme* would be translated in English by *individualism* by most people. Do they actually mean the same thing? A look at the word association task in the archived exchanged section of the Cultura website<sup>4</sup> shows that the two cognates have quite different meanings. In actual fact the cultural models of the two words are so far apart that we can consider them false cognate (Blyth, 2012). For the Americans, individualism is mostly a positive quality, but for the French it is not. French students in the Cultura experiment mostly associated the word “individualisme” with selfishness; American students associated the word with freedom and independence (Blyth, 2012, p.62).

### **THE SAPIR-WHORF HYPOTHESIS**

The Sapir-Whorf Hypothesis, also known as the Whorfian Hypothesis, Linguistic Determinism, or the Linguistic Relativity Hypothesis, claims that the structure of a language determines how its speakers view the world (Wardhaugh, 2010). This is the strong version of the hypothesis because it implies a very strong link between language and culture. A weaker version is that the structure of a language may not bear such an important responsibility for the way speakers of the language view the world, but the structure of the language does influence their worldview somewhat. The linguist Sapir contended that people are at the mercy of the language they use. People express themselves through a system, which is also the medium of expression for the society they belong to. The language habits of a community predispose certain choices of interpretation of what is going on around us. Whorf went further by positing that the relationship between culture and language is not just a predisposition, but a

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<sup>4</sup> [http://cultura.mit.edu/answerArchived/view/question\\_id/4175](http://cultura.mit.edu/answerArchived/view/question_id/4175)

deterministic relation. Whorf studied the Hopi language of Arizona and compared it to European languages like French and English. He claimed that the Hopi see the world as an ongoing set of processes where time and space flow into each other and where things are not countable. This is because of the structure of their language. On the contrary, French or English speakers think of everything, including time and space, as measurable and countable, because of the structure of their languages.

The Whorfian Hypothesis presupposes that we see the world through the lenses of our language, but the cognitive process and logical structure for communication through language are not common to all human beings. Groups that utilize different linguistic systems will have different modes of thinking and perceiving the world. For example, in French we have the *tu* and the *vous* forms to express more or less formality when addressing people. In English, we only have one form, the *you*. This translates into two different ways of interacting with people. The French tend to be more formal than the Americans. For the French, it is as if Americans inappropriately *tutoient* people all the time (they use the informal address form). Would this be the result of the lack of *vouvoiement* in English (the formal address form)? There certainly seem to be more ways of expressing niceties in English than in French. Expressions like “it was nice to meet you”, or “I look forward to meeting you” are very difficult to translate in French. Does this mean that French has fewer linguistic resources available to express politeness? This could explain why the French seem rude to Americans.

The Whorfian Hypothesis is a very seductive concept because it appears very logical. If the Eskimos classify snow with many subtle linguistic distinctions, it is because they *perceive* snow more complexly than those who use a language that only has one word for snow. Similarly, Bedouins have

many words for camels and camel behaviors because they probably see camels differently than people in the western world since their livelihood is essentially the raising and selling of camels. This is very logical. However, it is not clear how the hypothesis might be tested and what the results of experiments actually prove (Wardhaugh, 2010).

One thing is for sure: learning a foreign language gives students new perspectives on life. As a French professor of English recently said<sup>5</sup>, “apprendre une langue étrangère enrichit la pensée” (learning a foreign language enriches your thoughts).

### **LANGUACULTURE**

Linguistic anthropologist Michael Agar coined the term *languaculture*. Languaculture refers to the blending of language and culture into a single integrated entity. It encompasses the idea that “using a language involves all manner of background knowledge and local information in addition to grammar and vocabulary” (Agar, 2006). Agar defines culture as a translation between LC1 (source languaculture [i.e., our own culture]) and LC2 (target languaculture). In his view, a culture is always defined in relation to other languacultures. Learning an LC2 is always done in relationship with an LC1. This type of learning is driven by *rich points*, which are the moments of surprise when we find ourselves in an unexpected situation because our LC1 frames of reference are different from LC2’s frames of reference. We learn from the misunderstandings that result from these diverging frames of reference. These rich points

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<sup>5</sup> This is from the daily news bulletin on French television on Saturday November 3, 2012.  
<http://www.france2.fr/it/20h/>

allow students to identify the elements that they take for granted in LC1 but do not match the elements of LC2. This is the *location* where students can truly learn about other cultures.

According to Agar, the focus of *langua* is on discourse in use by the society, not on isolated words and sentences. *Langua* is a way of thinking that is reflected in conversations. Similarly, Ferdinand de Saussure (1916) defines *la langue* as a system of related elements that reflects human actions and society. What we do as FL educators is help students make sense of a new system that focuses on the similarities and common experiences of a new group of individuals (the target culture) and to be able to use this system appropriately. This is a very difficult task. One way to teach culture to our students in a more manageable way, is to use anecdotes. An anecdote, as defined by Agar (1994, p.98), is "...a brief narrative of a situation". Agar's definition of an anecdote illustrates the mini-dramas that involve certain actors in a certain set of circumstances. Anecdotes provide a means of transmitting complex cultural knowledge to our students. Movies in the target language are one medium that can help us with teaching languaculture because they provide a window into the life of members of the LC2.

### **TEACHING CULTURE**

Why should students learn a foreign culture? First, culture and language are often so intertwined that it is impossible to distinguish one from the other. Secondly, culture implies knowledge beyond the language found in most dictionaries and textbooks. Culture shapes human beings. People think, act, and react in response to culturally conditioned images. Understanding what these images mean to foreigners helps us to understand others. Comprehending other cultures can potentially bring a mutual acceptance of others, a valuing of ethnic and cultural diversity. This is a life skill that makes us grow as human beings.

Some of the aspects of teaching a foreign culture are extremely fuzzy and idiosyncratic. For example, the schema a French person has in mind for a concept like *dinner party* is very different from the schema an American person will have. The French person will think of the dining room table with a beautiful table cloth and fine china, a five course menu and some fine wines for each course, and she will worry about where to place the guests (who is sitting next to who). In Texas, a dinner party script involves some finger food on the kitchen island, wine that people will bring, burgers grilled outside on the patio, people mingling around with big smiles on their faces, everybody talking to everybody, loud laughter, etc. A French instructor in Texas should take these two differing views of what a dinner party is into account when s/he explains how the French entertain.

FL educators have differing goals for teaching cultures. These include studying cultural facts and practices, understanding the common beliefs of people who speak the target language, developing positive attitudes towards these people, and teaching communication skills that go beyond language. The two extremes of the spectrum of culture teaching can be characterized, on the one hand, by lectures containing tidbits of facts (food, great monuments, etc.) and by the study of great literary masterpieces. On the other hand, culturally appropriate behavior is seen by many instructors as even more important as speaking the target language with near-native proficiency and having an intimate knowledge of its “high” culture.

## **Chapter 2 – The Importance of Context**

Highly contextualized information is crucial in foreign language teaching. Role plays are often not successful because the classroom context is so far removed from that of the target culture. I argue that movies, used appropriately, can potentially provide a more authentic learning experience because of the ways they present the target culture.

### **USING AUTHENTIC MOVIES**

A movie is a window into the life of a people. A French Canadian movie is a good way for exposing students to the culture of francophone Canada as well as French Canadian linguistic input. A Francophone African movie can be a good illustration of linguistic variation of French as well as cultural habits of Moroccans, Tunisians, or Algerians. While a movie can illustrate a cultural point via a few carefully chosen images, 1000 words might be needed to explain the same point. The combination of sound, image and words in films is much more powerful to illustrate complex cultural concepts than words alone.

As previously mentioned, CLT approaches are favored nowadays because they focus on the meaning of language in use rather than on its form. Authentic movie dialogues are perfect examples of language that can be exploited for form-meaning connection activities. The use of authentic language in communicative teaching is encouraged for many reasons. Authentic language is:

- a) Rich source of natural language input,
- b) Real communicative purpose,

c) Input that is very different from textbook and that might fill gaps in students' competence, and

d) L2 (target language) users' interactions with each other using meaningful language.

Authentic language is not necessarily more difficult than edited simplified language. What matters most is the amount of authentic material that is used and what task the learners are asked to do with the language (Cook, 2008). First semester students, for instance, can watch a movie trailer in French and perform a simple activity such as identifying the characters and the genre of the film. The instructor might also ask simple questions like "would you like this movie", "would you enjoy watching this movie with your family? With your friends?", "what do you think the movie is about?"

Authentic FL movies can be used at all levels of proficiency. For example, at the intermediate level (3<sup>rd</sup> and 4<sup>th</sup> semesters), movies can be paired with a grammar review book for building linguistic proficiency as well as cultural awareness. They can be used for bridging gaps between levels where we might focus on a specific skill, such as listening comprehension. This approach might be most appropriate to prepare students for a study abroad/immersion program. Movies can also be used for more specialized courses, such as a historical perspective of French society<sup>6</sup> relying on, for instance, three movies that show the evolution of French mores from the Middle Ages - *Les Visiteurs* directed by Jean-Marie Poiré – the 18<sup>th</sup> century – *Ridicule* by Patrice Leconte – and contemporary France – *Le Dîner de Cons* by Francis Weber.

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6 This is an actual French intermediate course offered at Texas State University in San Marcos, TX, and developed by Dr. Forrest from Texas State University.

Authentic movies can generate new ideas to enhance discussions in FL courses. Krueger, Weber and Martin (2005) argue that students are more engaged and aware of their language acquisition experience when we build on their existing cinematic culture and because we position them as an “informer learner”, that is, “an experienced viewer and critic of films”.

#### **DEFINING CULTURE WITH MOVIES**

In a recent article, Dubreil (2011) described the movie-based course he developed to bridge the gap between his students’ experiences and the cultural realities of the *banlieues* (poor, suburban, working-class, and mostly immigrant communities in present-day France). He described the teaching context: a US university where students had a very different and somewhat distorted view the 2005 riots in France. Dubreil chose five French feature films that focused on the issues of multicultural identities, violence, authority, justice, and equality/inequality in contemporary France. Dubreil’s teaching philosophy—as it plays out in this course—is very analytical and ambitious. It may, therefore, not be applicable to other teaching contexts.

In my opinion, the tumultuous and violent nature of the movies chosen by Dubreil, as well as the politicized messages, is not an appropriate choice for all students and teachers. If the primary teaching objective is the French language and culture, as opposed to advocacy and critical thinking, the movie choice may be totally opposite to Dubreil’s. Comedies or family movies are as valid as *cinéma de banlieue* (movies that portray life in French poor and largely immigrant-populated suburbs and that engage sociopolitical issue of inequalities in French society). In my opinion, comedies are meant to entertain; hence courses based on French comedies may attract more students.



An interesting point of this article is the demonstration of how full-feature films open windows onto specific aspects of the French culture. Carefully chosen films offer a mostly accurate representation of cultural values and beliefs, even if the depicted “reality” reflects the point of view of the director, which is, of course, not objective.

Incidentally, Dubreil mentions a word association class activity based on the Cultura website. Cultura<sup>7</sup> is an excellent resource for teaching French culture because it contains a large number of existing Franco-American projects. Dubreil illustrates how French teachers can simply piggyback on the wealth of information available on this website for teaching French culture and French language to American students.

#### **USING VIDEO TO TEACH CULTURE**

Traditionally, FL education has been centered on linguistic skills, and culture is more of an add-on that teachers try to fit in. However, “if one views language as social practice, culture becomes the core of foreign language instruction” (Herron, Dubreil, Corrie, & Cole, 2002, p.36). This quotation is from a study on the use of video in French classes as a teaching aid for cultural knowledge at the intermediate level. The authors are not simply talking about teaching grammatical or linguistic competence, or vocabulary development. They are including pragmatic competence, a skill that is often viewed as

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<sup>7</sup> Cultura is a Web-based intercultural project that provides tools for educators and students to learn about each other’s language and culture. The use of Cultura in the classroom is developed in the pedagogical applications section of this report. For more information, go to <http://cultura.mit.edu/>

something that cannot be taught in a classroom, something that students acquire on their own, living abroad for example.

It is interesting to note that the ACTFL Proficiency Guidelines include “pragmatic competence” and “sociolinguistic competence” among the features considered when assessing accuracy of the speaking proficiency of a learner (Omaggio-Hadley, 2001, p15). The new foreign language standards (1996/1999) emphasize the need to integrate the teaching of culture in curricula. As discussed above, video can help with this task.

Herron, Dubreil, Corrie, & Cole (2002) performed an empirical study on the effects of video on cultural knowledge at the intermediate level. Their research demonstrated that video can indeed enhance this type of knowledge. For their study, authentic video interviews with French-speakers from France, Canada, and the French Antilles were shown to the students. The videos used in the study accompanied *Bravo!*, a French textbook. The topics of the interviews reflected the themes, aspects of culture, and functions of the language presented in the text of the lesson. The scenes were recorded on location. The interviewees used contemporary authentic French language. Pretest and posttest assessments of the students’ included questions on cultural practices and cultural products. The findings supported the researchers’ initial hypothesis that the viewing of the videos would improve students’ cultural knowledge over the semester.

Not all teachers, however, agree on the value of authentic audiovisual material to teach a foreign language. Some scholars caution that using *only* unedited nonpedagogical materials in the classroom may “create more problems than it would solve, since materials are often difficult to select, obtain, or sequence for learners at lower proficiency levels” (Omaggio Hadley, 2001, p.188).

Unmodified discourse aimed at native-speakers may be very frustrating and anxiety-producing if it is totally beyond comprehension. Elaine Horwitz (2008) classifies materials used in the FL classroom as authentic or constructed (i.e. created for classroom purposes). Constructed materials have the advantage of using words and structures that learners should be able to recognize. The issue is that this type of material lacks authentic contextualization of the language in use. This is a major drawback for teaching culture: decontextualized language or low-contextualized language may be sufficient to teach grammar forms but highly contextualized language is absolutely necessary for teaching culture. Therefore, I argue that constructed material is not appropriate for teaching culture.

Some SLA researchers cite the risk of cognitive overload for L2 students when, for example, watching authentic videos in the L2 with captions; the concern is that learners might not attend to audio because they are paying attention to the captions (Borras & Lafayette, 1994, as cited in Sydorenko, 2010). The principle of cognitive load theory is that all human beings have a limited attention capacity (working memory limit) and overloading this limit undermines the learning process. Thus, when watching an authentic video, students may reach this cognitive limit because they have to concentrate on decoding the language itself as well as on the cultural cues. In the Herron and associates study, where speakers of different varieties of French were used (France, Canada, and Antilles), accents were probably a hurdle for many students. Hence, understanding the local variety of French further taxed students' limited information processing capacity and hindered their learning.

The role of the teacher is crucial for successful learning of foreign culture, especially when using this medium. The key is to carefully select controlled and guided activities for raising cultural awareness. Below, I will discuss activities and methods best adapted for this purpose.

## TEACHING STYLISTIC VARIATION

Another facet of language that lends itself well to multimedia is stylistic variation. Traditional textbook French is based on the prescribed Standard French (SF) norm, also known as Parisian French, Standard Metropolitan French and le français standard. SF is formal and is mostly used in writing by French native speakers. Sociolinguists argue that speaking in SF, as opposed to writing in SF, results in hypercorrection and purism since it is mostly a register used in written language. They further assert that no one in the Francophone world actually speaks this way in everyday life (Valdman, 2003). Nowadays, many scholars advocate raising learners' awareness of register variation.

Teaching word connotation is more complicated than teaching denotation because it is implicit yet very important. Stylistic variation for a given word will guide its usage in a given context. Using the wrong register in a specific situation results in miscommunications, misunderstandings, and possibly mini dramas, such as the person appearing rude, standoffish, old-fashioned, out-of-touch, or just plain stupid. Schmitt (2000, p.35) recommends that instructors be "tuned in" to register in order to successfully teach connotations. Movies make this easier by showing vocabulary in context. With the large input provided in an authentic movie, we are more likely to come across subsequent exposure to words students might already know, but which are used in a different context. These are perfect opportunities to bring students' attention to register and to teach them learning strategies to guess the hidden and full meaning of words.

Teaching register variation is indeed of paramount importance as stylistic blunders can have unpleasant consequences. Choice of words from the wrong register or the mixing of registers is a very

frequent mistake (Etienne & Sax, 2006). Thus, teaching French stylistic variation through authentic French documents is one way to prevent such mistakes.

Brantmeier, in an article on the transition from beginning to literature courses, asserts that “It is in the intermediate level courses where students should become equipped with the skills necessary to read extensive, L2 authentic texts” (2003, p. 1). Recent studies have identified a deficit in the teaching of stylistic variation in French intermediate textbooks. As a result, sociolinguists are now advocating a more explicit focus on such variation in French classrooms (Etienne and Sax, 2009). Below, I will show how movies and French graphic novels are excellent media for teaching stylistic variation.

#### **INTERCULTURAL COMPETENCE**

If we consider that the study of culture in its own right is crucial, we need to include intercultural competence (IC). IC can be defined as the ability to communicate successfully with people from other cultures. This does not involve speaking the other people’s language necessarily. In fact in the 21<sup>st</sup> century most intercultural communication is in English. However, knowing English does not mean being able to communicate *successfully* with other cultures. For example, interrupting the other while s/he speaks can be totally acceptable in certain cultures, such as in Latin America or in France. If you interrupt your interlocutor, it could mean that you are passionate about the subject, you want to add something important before s/he develops her/his point, you want to help the other, etc. In other cultures, interrupting someone who is talking is not an acceptable behavior. For example, I have witnessed a professor at UT interrupting a student while she was speaking. The student was very offended. The professor, who was from Latin America, never meant to be rude or disrespectful because interrupting is an acceptable behavior in her native culture.

Cross-cultural competence is sometimes used as a synonym for intercultural competence. However, cross-cultural training is sometimes associated with the study of the differences between cultures. The two are obviously related. IC encompasses much more than knowing the L2 culture. It can be found at the intersection of knowledge of the native and the target culture, attitudes, and interpretive or investigative skills. It is most of all about attitudes towards understanding the other. These attitudes are a mix of “curiosity and openness, along with a willingness to remain flexible as information accrues and perspectives change” (Byron, 1997, as cited in Bauer, de Benedette, Furstenberg, Levet, and Waryn, 2006). Such attitudes are contrary to most people’s reaction: most people would judge, pass judgment on others when confronted with something they do not understand, or with something that goes against their basic principles. IC is about understanding the perspectives of people who belong to the target language community. Understanding why they say what they say, why they think the way they think.

The following quotation from Marcel Proust eloquently illustrates the philosophy behind IC and how it differs from the knowledge of cultural facts (Furstenberg, Levet, English and Maillet, 2001): « La seule véritable exploration, la seule véritable fontaine de Jouvence ne serait pas de visiter des terres étrangères, mais de posséder d'autres yeux, de regarder l'univers à travers les yeux des autres » (The only true exploration, the only genuine fountain of youth, would not be to visit foreign lands but to possess other eyes, to look at the universe through the eyes of others.) The difficulty in teaching IC is that these aspects of knowledge are elusive, abstract, and invisible. Here is another quote from Russian philosopher Bakhtin that illustrates this process of uncovering the other culture (Furstenberg, Levet, English and Maillet, 2001): “It is only in the eyes of another culture that foreign culture reveals itself fully

and profoundly .... A meaning only reveals its depths once it has encountered and come into contact with another foreign meaning.”

The authors of the IC Cultura project mentioned above refer to IC as the silent language. A good way to unveil the mystery, to hear and see this invisible knowledge, is to compare views of similar items from the two cultures. The discovery of the L2 culture in this manner is a journey of discovery and reflection. We, as FL educators, guide this process through a series of activities designed to expose complex artifacts that gradually broaden the learners’ scope of inquiry. We will see in more detail in the pedagogical applications chapter<sup>8</sup> how movies can be used concretely in FL courses to achieve these goals.

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<sup>8</sup> See the Cultura section in Chapter 5.

## Chapter 3 – Use of Multimedia

Now that we have established *what* we need to teach, we turn our attention to *how* we should teach these aspects of language. In particular, we will discuss the use of multimedia in FL teaching.

### MULTIMODALITY

It is generally accepted that learning styles involve four broad sensory modalities: visual, auditory, reading/writing and kinesthetic. People rarely use only one modality for learning information. Life itself is multimodal. We constantly use all of our senses (touch, vision, smell, taste, and hearing). We switch between one modality and the other when we carry out a task. We mix these modalities in different proportions, often even within a single activity. FL educators should, therefore, apply multiple learning methods to take into account diverse modalities and learning styles. Through multimodal learning and teaching, we can engage multiple sensory systems and include a variety of visual inputs, in addition to text. Some examples of non-textual support include pictures, art, film, video, and graphic organizers.

Recently, some researchers have focused on blending various technologies and methods, including face-to-face, online technologies and mobile devices, to appeal to the new generation of technology-savvy learners. They recommend that various modalities of learning be taken into account through traditional classroom practices, television, movies, radio, songs and music, the internet, multimedia presentations, computer games, mobile computing and other interactive applications. This approach, called “blended learning and teaching”, is best represented by the following figure.





Figure 1 - Blended Learning Methodology.

One example of blended learning is the online open textbook *Français Interactif* that combines multiple input modalities such as traditional texts, interactive online activities, videos, and podcasts for mobile learning. This first year French online textbook can also be used as a traditional face-to-face classroom method.

In educational psychology, we generally define multimodal learning as environments that use multimedia (verbal and non-verbal data) to represent content knowledge (Moreno & Mayer, 2007). The argument here is that student understanding can be enhanced by the addition of non-verbal knowledge representations (e.g., illustrations, photos, video, and animation) to verbal explanations (e.g., printed and spoken texts). This process has been referred to as the *Multimedia Principle*. Here, we are referring to the presentation mode (i.e., words and images), which Mayer distinguishes from sensory modality (i.e., auditory and visual). According to the *Modality Principle* of instructional design, the most effective instructional environment is one that takes multimedia and multimodality principles into account, thus combining verbal and non-verbal representations of knowledge with these mixed modality presentations (Moreno & Mayer, 2007). This dual representation allows for the cognitive load to be split between the auditory and the visual modalities. Learning is, thus, more efficient.

*Interactive* multimodal environments are those in which the learner's action alters something in the learning environment. There are five common types of interactivity: dialoguing, controlling, manipulating, searching, and navigating. Controlling occurs when the "learner determines pace and/or order of presentation"--for instance, when s/he uses the pause/play and rewind buttons when watching a video. Another example of an interactive multimodal learning environment relevant to L2 learning would be when the learner has control over the language options when watching a movie: the L1 (i.e., English) translation, target language captions, or no subtitles or captions at all. Multimodal environments are indeed a promising new direction for language learning. Certain aspects remain problematic, in particular the risk that processing *demands* may exceed the aforementioned processing *capacity* of the cognitive system.

#### **THE DUAL-CODING THEORY**

Paivio's work on mental representations is based on the use of imagery in learning. His *Dual Coding Theory* (DCT) posits the existence of two distinct subsystems for cognition: a verbal one relating to language and a nonverbal one relating to nonlinguistic objects and events (Paivio, 1990). In this view, verbal system units (*logogens*) contain information that underlie our use of words. Non-Verbal system units (*imagens*) contain information used to generate mental images such as natural objects, holistic parts of objects, and natural grouping of objects. Imagens operate synchronously or in parallel: All parts of an image are available at once. Logogens operate sequentially: words come one at a time in a syntactically appropriate sequence in a sentence. The verbal and non-verbal systems overlap in information processing but greater emphasis is on one or the other. The two systems are further divided

into subsystems that process information from different modalities. Figure 2 below illustrates the schematic depiction of the structure of the verbal and nonverbal symbolic systems (Paivio, 1990, p.67)

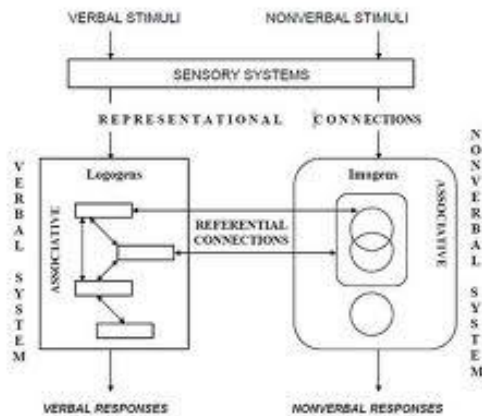


Figure 2 - DCT Verbal and Nonverbal Systems.

One implication of this theory is that when we store the concept of a cat, we store the word *cat* if we are Anglophone or *chat* if we are Francophone in the logogens, and we store the image of a cat in the imagens. When we recall the concept “cat”, we retrieve either the word or the image individually, or both, simultaneously. If only the word *cat* or *chat* is recalled, the image of the cat remains in our nonverbal system and can still be retrieved later.

#### IMPLICATIONS OF DCT FOR FOREIGN LANGUAGE EDUCATION

DCT theory has powerful implications for language teaching. Every language relies on a linguistic system, which itself relies on words, and their duality between form and meaning. The form of a word--either written or oral--is intrinsically linked to the concept it represents. This echoes Saussure’s definition of the *linguistic sign* as made of two parts: the form that he called *le signifiant (the signifier)*, and the concept that he called *le signifié (the signified)* (Antes, 2007). He posited the sign relation as

dyadic (figure 3). According to Saussure, the linguistic sign is made of two inseparable yet distinct parts: the signified and the signifier.

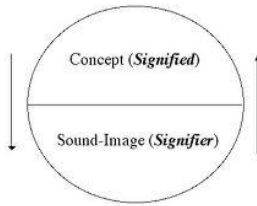


Figure 3 - Saussure's Linguistic Sign.

We can think of the signifier as the verbal system of DCT (imagens), and the signified as the nonverbal system (logogens). When we learn a second or foreign language (L2) we develop a new verbal representational system (a new signifier or logogens) that corresponds to the target language. There are referential interconnections between representations of old (L1) and new (L2) nonverbal representations in the imagens system, as well as associative interconnections with already established first language verbal representations.

A direct pedagogical implication of DCT is that the verbal system of an L2 should be taught with direct association to its nonverbal referents. These referents constitute the existing knowledge of the world of the learner. The L2 knowledge taps into this existing referential nonverbal knowledge to construct meaning of the L2. The richer and more direct the referential interconnections, the more efficient L2 use will be. Referential availability uses the powerful mnemonic properties of nonverbal stimuli and imagery.

FL educators are well aware of the benefits of combining images with words. Traditionally textbooks have many pictures that supplement written texts. L2 learners are quite used to multimedia

documents in FL courses. Almost all FL instructional programs include DVDs and online videos, as well as ancillary packages with more interactive media activities.

A number of studies have been carried out on the use of visual learning aids in the language classroom. Input, in particular, has received considerable attention in the field of second language acquisition (Gass and Selinker, 2008). As we discussed earlier, multimodality is input that uses two or more semiotic systems (sound, touch, language, gestures, odors, etc.) or input that addresses different learning styles through multisensory environments and strategies. Traditionally, we think of input for L2 learning in the form of *listening* to spoken L2 or *reading* L2 input. Recently, with the increased use of multimedia in the language classroom, Second Language Acquisition (SLA) researchers have focused on even more types of input, such as video and other aforementioned media.

A research study performed by Sydorenko (2010) emphasized the powerful influence of input modality on vocabulary acquisition. Sydorenko claimed that captioned video tends to aid recognition of written word forms and the learning of word meaning, while non-captioned video (video and audio, but no text) tends to improve listening comprehension. Captions are onscreen text transcripts in the same language as audio. Captions are preferred by FL instructors over subtitles (translation of the audio in the native language of the learners) because captions provide additional input in the L2.

Another study on the vocabulary development of English learners in Turkey revealed how animation contributes to students' achievement in vocabulary learning (Kayaoglu, Dag Akbas and Ozturk, 2011). The results of the study also support the introduction of animation in the FL classroom for motivational purposes: students liked the experience and stated that it was easier to infer the meaning of words with visuals.

## LIMITATIONS OF MULTIMEDIA

According to information processing theories of learning, there could be a conflict between the benefits of multimedia input and the limits of working memory. For example, in Syrodenko's study captioned videos were used. L2 learners had to divide their attention among three types of stimuli: visual images, text, and audio. They had to use their attention *selectively* or risk cognitive overload.

Cognitive overload may be a serious problem when dealing with multimedia because learners have to process different input modes at the same time. This can decrease or even inhibit learners' ability to perform a task. Teachers should make sure that various modalities express redundant information rather than divergent information. Teachers should also provide supporting information, such as new vocabulary lists, key L2 terms, grammar, background knowledge on the topic being presented in the material, and cultural explanations.

It is very important for language instructors to *precisely* define the task (e.g. general comprehension, vocabulary learning, etc.) when using authentic videos. Tasks should also be congruent with the learners' proficiency levels. We can adjust the length of the video for each activity and the type of text being provided (subtitles, captions, separate script, no text). For low proficiency level, it is best to choose very short extracts (1 minute) and captions (or subtitles if the passage is too difficult). Longer extracts can be used and captions may be removed as proficiency increases. Examples of how this can be done are provided in the pedagogical applications section.

## Chapter 4 - Implication for the Teaching of French

We will now discuss how to teach French as a foreign language in the US, taking into account the theoretical issues outlined in the previous sections.

### USING MOVIES IN THE FOREIGN LANGUAGE CLASSROOM

Pegrum, Hartley and Wechtler, in a 2005 survey of attitudes towards non-Anglophone cinema among 138 students at a UK university, found that 94% of respondents saw a clear benefit in using movies for language learning. The researchers noted that most respondents wanted films to be “relaxing and enjoyable” (Pegrum, Hartley and Wechtler, 2005, p.58). A third of the participants found foreign language films “very serious” and “not as light-hearted” as they would have liked (p.58). What types of films should we choose for French courses in US universities? Among Americans, French cinema has acquired the reputation of being overly serious and boring. While this was perhaps the case in the past, there are more light-hearted and accessible French films than ever before. In a recent article<sup>9</sup>, published in the September 9, 2012 issue of the newspaper *Le Parisien*, it was reported that the 2011 comedy “*Intouchables* vient de battre le record historique détenu par *Amélie Poulain* du film français le plus vu à l'étranger...” [*Intouchables* has just beaten the historical record of *Amélie Poulain* for the French movie the most watched abroad]. This comedy has been particularly successful in the US, earning \$10 million in box office receipts.

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9 <http://www.leparisien.fr/cinema/actualite-cinema/cinema-a-l-etranger-intouchables-fait-mieux-qu-amelie-poulain-09-09-2012-2156820.php>

Thus, entertaining and light movies, easily accessible to American students, are recommended. Conversely, psychological dramas are not because students struggle with long and frequent monologues (Bueno, 2009). Action movies would be a good choice if the images support understanding of the spoken language clearly enough. Comedies, adventure, action, thriller, romance films, as well as animations are all recommended, provided that the content is interesting and appropriate. A common sense test for an “appropriate” movie might be whether or not a middle-class educated mother would be comfortable watching the movie with her teenaged children. Some scenes may not fit this criterion, but they can easily be omitted from the study material.

It may be a good idea to select movies that feature well-known French filmmakers and actors because students will be more interested in artists they have heard of. We can also choose according to content, selecting themes that are likely to interest and motivate our students. Or, we can choose a film because of its educational value. For example, if we are focusing on cultural competence, we can pick a French film that was remade in an American version, like *La Totale* (*True Lies* is the American remake).

If we want to focus on French culture, we can select movies that treat issues pertaining to French society, as suggested in Rice’s method *La France contemporaine à travers ses films* (Contemporary France through its movies) (2011). Other textbooks, such as *Cinéphile* (Konditto, 2011), or *Cinema for French conversation* (Rice, 2007) may be used to build linguistic proficiency in a meaningful context. If the focus of the class is to develop critical thinking as well as language skills, *Mise en scène: cinéma et lecture* (Krueger, Weber and Martin, 2005) may be used.



## HOW TO INTEGRATE MOVIES INTO FRENCH COURSES

The question of how we should integrate movies in FL courses is not trivial. As mentioned above, instructors should provide appropriate support to help students to comprehend and learn language from films. Some of the techniques that are likely to be helpful include: a first viewing of a difficult scene in a French movie with English subtitles, a second viewing with French captions and a third viewing with no text at all. Perhaps extracts can be played with no language options. Transcription of complicated scenes could also provide additional help. The scripts can be stored in a separate document made available to the students.

The length of the video or movie extracts is of paramount importance. For beginning French learners, one or two minutes of authentic unedited multimedia material are ample. Language options should be selected according to the task and the proficiency level of the learners. Homework should be used for multiple viewing. Each new viewing of the same extract should provide additional form-meaning connections until the complete passage is totally understood.

It is a good idea to use a course management system to deliver the film in segments with language options appropriate for the proficiency level of the students (Bueno, 2009). In this way, instructors can decide which scenes are to be viewed with which language options, which are for homework activities and which are for classroom activities. It is recommended that instructors carefully organize all the files associated with each extract in the course management systems: instructions for activities, scripts, vocabulary lists, grammar explanations, etc. Of course, the use of the pause button is very convenient anytime we see students experience comprehension problems in the classroom. We can then provide linguistic or cultural support and hit the rewind button to replay the scene. The

teaching of grammar might also complement the movies and the aforementioned activities. It may be useful for students to refer to a grammar book or online French grammars<sup>10</sup> to explain certain language features that are encountered in the films.

### **THE FUN FACTOR**

“L'ennui est contre-révolutionnaire” (boredom is a counter-revolutionary act) was a much re-stencilled graffito on the walls of Paris, France, in May, 1968. I strongly believe that FL instructors should choose movies carefully so as to avoid ennui in the classroom. As mentioned above, it may be that students consider French movies as more serious than and not as entertaining as American movies. Many French films are, in fact, pessimistic. If we are to use French cinema in the classroom, it is important to avoid such films so as not to reinforce the stereotype of this type of movie.

The recent Oscar victory of *The Artist* has unveiled a renewed confidence of the 21st-century French film industry. Indeed French cinema is capable of producing work more likely to be appreciated by Americans, such as *Amélie* and *Intouchables*. This is an excellent opportunity for French teachers to “piggy back” on the new popularity of French movies. We can show our students how much fun learning French via films can be. My fun factor in the classroom is supported by the work of Stephen Krashen, who posits “[an] Affective Filter...made up of the learners’ feelings about language learning” (Horwitz, 2008, p.32). Learners with low affective filters have high motivation and positive opinions about the target language and culture. In a word, they learn better. The implication of the Affective

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<sup>10</sup> Tex’s French Grammar <http://www.laits.utexas.edu/tex/gr/> and Le Point du FLE <http://www.lepointdufle.net/> are both excellent online free resources for teaching French grammar

Filter for language teaching is that anything that creates a relaxed, trusting, engaging, lively, and interesting classroom atmosphere is going to be conducive to communication. Students are more likely to participate, they produce more language, they hear more input from other students, and they are more motivated to learn.

Instructors might also include the occasional song for seasonal events, like a video of *Hymne à l'Amour*<sup>11</sup> on Valentine's Day or *Petit Papa Noël*<sup>12</sup> before the winter Holliday, to break the routine of the course. Even poetry can be introduced. After all, children learn their first language playing with words, and their first books are intensely poetic, like Dr. Seuss, for example (Blyth, 2003). Returning to the topic of French film, the Oscar victory of Jean Dujardin (the leading actor of *the Artist*) can be an opportunity to talk about the role of FL movies in US society, how they introduce linguistic diversity in the American media, how the French have a long-term relationship with Hollywood, etc. Adopting a flexible teaching philosophy that permits instructors to increase the learners' knowledge of cultural facts when an opportunity arises makes the course more in tune with current events, and more fun. I truly believe in the power of entertainment to fully engage French learners.

#### INPUT ENHANCEMENT

The notion of Input Enhancement (IE) suggests that instructors orient instruction to specific input. We can make such input more salient by such means as, for example, using bold font or a

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<sup>11</sup> Here is an authentic video of Edith Piaf performing her famous love song *Hymne à l'Amour*:  
[http://www.dailymotion.com/video/xlger\\_l-hymne-a-l-amour\\_music](http://www.dailymotion.com/video/xlger_l-hymne-a-l-amour_music)

<sup>12</sup> Arthur H revisits the classic Christmas song *Petit Papa Noël* from Tino Rossi in the animated movie *L'apprenti père Noël*: <http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=W2ZmTMzN5NY>

highlighter with written input. When dealing with videos or movies, instructors can press the pause button, repeat a specific phrase and/or write it on the board. Alternatively, instructors may not wish to stop the recording but will still need to make a word or phrase more salient by using it in subsequent communicative activities. Film can also enhance grammar learning via controlled exposure to a large number of instances of a certain target structure. Instructors can simply saturate the learner with the form in natural speech. This procedure is known as input flood and its utilization is supported by results of Tracy and White's study on French adverb placement (Tracy and White, 1993, as cited in Wong, 2005).

For vocabulary development, Paul Nation (2008) asserts that we should teach high frequency words and let students deal with low frequency words on their own. We also know that it requires multiple exposures for a word to be truly known (Nation, 2008). We can use input enhancement techniques with movie dialogues to raise consciousness about frequent words we want our students to integrate.

### **FOCUS-ON-FORM**

Michael Long coined the term Focus-on-Form in 1991 and characterized it as "reactive and incidental" (Spada and Lighbown, 2008, p.185). Focus-on-Form (FoF) refers to a way to draw learners' attention to both form and meaning. When using authentic material, instructors can integrate form-focused instruction to help students to learn specific grammar points or linguistic features. An example of FoF would be a mini grammar lesson when a student is struggling with a particular point. This technique may work best at the intermediate level because students are supposed to have covered the basic grammar in their first year of French. By the time they are in their second or third year, it may be

necessary to refresh their memory when they seem not to understand a specific form, or we can build on their existing knowledge to explain a new form. The incidental and reactive nature of a mini lesson can also be applied to a cultural point in the same way. For example, teachers can pause a video to explain a cultural reference. We could call this *Focus-on-Culture*. The integration of Focus-on-Form and Focus-on-Culture into communicative activities is essential. The idea is that instruction is delivered when it is needed.

With FoF, grammar knowledge is encoded in the context of a communicative activity. Therefore, retrieval of this knowledge is likely to be easier when learners find themselves in a similar situation, using similar processes, or in the presence of the same objects (Spada and Lightbown, 2008).

With tools like FoF and IE, we can teach language features and frequent vocabulary words in an integrated fashion with authentic material. These tools allow FL educators to build their courses on interesting and authentic content like movies and video while still teaching language at the same time.

### **GUIDED INDUCTION**

Guided Induction (GI) is an inductive approach to teaching grammar. Many foreign language methods and instructors adhere to a deductive approach to teaching grammar where the teacher explains a grammar rule first and subsequently guides the class in practicing application of the rule, through exercises and exposure to more samples of the feature. In contrast to deductive approaches, an inductive approach encourages a more active role on behalf of the learner because the grammar lesson progresses from one or several particular exemplars of a grammar feature to the general rule.

There is empirical evidence that supports grammar learning through GI (Heron and Tomasello, 1992). GI is similar to IE and FoF in the sense that the teacher does not specifically state the rules. Grammar is taught through contextualized data that serves to illustrate a grammar point or a rule. The students take an active role by inducing the underlying grammatical pattern illustrated in the sample for themselves. The teacher merely points to the pattern. S/he can focus the learners' attention on the principal features of the grammar feature by asking them to complete model sentences with a structure analogous to the one demonstrated in the input. This type of activity is a suggestion in case the students do not understand or have forgotten the particular feature being enhanced in the input. Such a completion activity acts as feedback on the accuracy of the learners' linguistic hypotheses (Heron and Tomasello, 1992).

Just like IE and FoF, GI grammar instruction is perfect for use with authentic videos and movies. The teacher can point to a specific language feature in the input and guide the students through the discovery, or review if they have learned the feature in the past, of the linguistic or grammar rule. The deeper involvement of the learners due to the fact that they have to work at the formulation of the rule - whether it is done consciously by asking them to present the metalinguistic information or rules in a feedback activity, or not – suggests that learning is deeper. This is congruent with the concept of depth of processing which refers to the chance of some piece of new information being stored in long-term memory based on the depth with which it is processed ( Craik and Lockhart, 1972, as cited in Hulstijn and Laufer, 2001). Shallow processing usually results in storage in short-term memory. Long-term memory is a stable form of memory as opposed to short-term memory which is very volatile.

From a psychology of learning point of view, these three approaches are constructivist in nature because the learners experience the environment first-hand and create meaning from the data presented to them. Neuroscience now supports this form of active learning as the way people naturally learn. If we ask students to work in groups, this is actually more of a social constructivist approach because students construct knowledge through real life experience in a group. Our role as educators is one of a mentor during the discovery and building process of knowledge. There is ample research in this domain that demonstrates the value of this type of approach (e.g. Vygotsky, Piaget, Bruner, Montessori, J.R. Anderson, etc.) The main limitation of inductive approaches is the time it takes for learning to occur. This would be a valid concern if we were to use inductive methods to teach everything in a FL. With video as data, we can choose where we want the learners to focus their attention. This requires determining features that demand the most time and effort.

## Chapter 5 - Pedagogical Applications

We now will see how we can address all the theoretical issues discussed in this report in the classroom. We will look at some general teaching principles for French university students as well as course ideas, some quite flushed out with syllabi and related activities. We will focus on concrete pedagogical applications based on video and movies and aimed at various proficiency levels.

### **FRENCH IN ACTION**

French in Action (FIA) is a highly successful educational television series created in 1987 by Pierre Capretz, a French professor at Yale University (Capretz and Lydgate, 1994). The series was part of a beginner's French multimedia course that included 52 thirty-minute episodes, workbooks, and textbooks. It has been aired frequently on PBS and has remained very popular, most likely because of the romantic story of Robert and Mireille (an unconsummated courtship of a disoriented American student in Paris for a beautiful blonde French student of art history at the Sorbonne), the humor, and the innovative immersion method used. Beginning with the second lesson, learners hear nothing but authentic, unsimplified French. Capretz also included a mime, animations and video clips from French cinema and TV for the series.

One reaction to FIA perhaps best underscores its lasting appeal: « Simply by watching this series of videos through two times, you could parachute into Abidjan and get along in day to day life from the moment you hit the ground. It's that good. Really. <sup>13</sup> » As a language course, FIA was unparalleled.

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<sup>13</sup> <http://kk.org/cooltools/archives/000521>



Capretz' FIA was a precursor of the use of authentic language in video format as the principal learning aid. His romantic comedy was delivered in cinematic segments interspersed among grammar lessons, much like what we now call FoF.

Capretz and the Yale Language Department Studio created another series called *French in Motion* (FIM) like *Jules et Jim*, a DVD ROM program designed to help people to learn French by watching a classic French film. *Jules et Jim* is based on Truffaut's movie of the same name. The program enables learners to watch the film continuously or in short segments. Learners may also call upon a transcription of the dialogues to familiarize themselves with written French.

The emphasis of FIA and FIM is on spoken language and communicative proficiency. By using materials like FIA and FIM, French instructors can train learners to use the language in the dynamic context of actual communication. The result is that learners are not so likely to be intimidated by foreign language study. They will hopefully realize that they do not have to speak French perfectly in order to be understood. The stress is on the development of skills, self-expression, and cultural insight. The role of the instructor is, then, evolving from an exponent of French grammar to "a key interpretant of French culture and an indispensable guide to the actual process of communication with French speakers" (Russo, Abbate, and Lydgate, 1994).

#### **COURSES AND ACTIVITIES FOR BEGINNING FRENCH**

*Français Interactif* is an Internet-based first-year French program used at the University of Texas in Austin. Cultural information is embedded naturally in video content and the real and spontaneous language captured in video interviews provides the context for in-class activities. One interesting aspect

of Français Interactif is its emphasis on vocabulary. The pedagogical sequence for vocabulary learning moves the learner from input to output and from decontextualized words to words in context. That is, learners first encounter new vocabulary in written and aural input several times before they are ever asked to produce the item. It is hoped that the learner is building confidence about a word's spelling and pronunciation before having to write or say it. In addition to the input-to-output progression, the progression of the type of input moves from purely written and auditory decontextualized input to authentic videos that use vocabulary in real-life contexts.

For example, in chapter 5 the first activity<sup>14</sup> is to listen and read to vocabulary referring to food (fruit, vegetables, etc.) Later, the student can watch a video<sup>15</sup> of a French native-speaker pointing to the various food items and naming them. The video is easy to understand, even if it is authentic language, because there is ample redundancy between the words and the images. In other words, the images support the text very clearly since the Native Speaker is saying “*vous avez les bananes*” (you have bananas) at the same time that the video is showing her hand pointing at the bananas. At the end of the chapter, after the learner has been exposed to various short videos like this one, the instructor can show more complex videos like the one about the chocolate<sup>16</sup> in Haute Savoie in the Culture section of chapter 5.

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14 Au marché/au supermarché vocabulary list: <http://www.laits.utexas.edu/fi/html/voc/05.html#037>

15 <http://www.laits.utexas.edu/fi/fivideo/chapitre-05-vocabulaire-en-contexte-au-march%C3%A9-les-fruits>

16 <http://www.laits.utexas.edu/fi/fivideo/chapitre-05-culture-saucissonen-chocolat>

Thus, the learner is progressively led to more complex authentic input. As was previously noted, it is important to go slowly at the lower levels of proficiency because of the higher risk of cognitive overload. The developers of Français Interactif have applied the principles of *processing instruction*, an input-oriented approach to grammar instruction, to the teaching of vocabulary. Within a single activity, they use vocabulary items that are semantically related, and create a simple meaning-based activity. Throughout each chapter, early input-based activities emphasizing receptive skills slowly lead to output-based activities that require production. The teaching of grammar follows a FoF approach (described above) and is illustrated in a fun and engaging way with, for example, the character Tex the Armadillo who wears a beret, caricaturing a French stereotype.

*Débuts* is a 1<sup>st</sup> year French method used at Texas State University. The method is based on the movie *le Chemin du Retour* which is a 2-hour feature film for beginning French students. The language is simple but authentic and gets more and more sophisticated as the film progresses through its story line. The movie is split into 24 episodes, with each episode corresponding to a chapter in the book. The narrative is about a young journalist and her pursuit of a family's secret about her grandfather's past during World War II. The film portrays real people who live and work in today's France, thus expanding the context for teaching French culture. The movie is set both in the present and in World War II. Students learn about this dramatic moment in French history and to understand its impact on contemporary France. The suspense linked to the mysterious grandfather's adventure is likely to make the course very interesting and enjoyable for both students and teachers. The close interface between the episodes and the textbook facilitates including culture as part of the language learning process. The pedagogical approach is of communicative competence with a strong focus on vocabulary development

with basic grammar concepts taught separately with a focus-on-forms approach. Appendix A gives a detailed review of the vocabulary development approach in Débuts.

Appendix B shows an activity for total French beginners based on an animated movie: *Les Aventures de Tintin, le Secret de la Licorne* (the Adventures of Tintin, the Secret of the Unicorn). *Le Secret de la Licorne* is a 2011 action movie by Steven Spielberg and Peter Jackson. It uses state-of-the-art performance capture technology to animate the actors, so it is a very entertaining Hollywood-style movie. The activity uses the French language movie trailer, and it illustrates how it is possible to use authentic unedited video material to teach French at the very beginning levels. The tasks students are asked to perform are based upon their proficiency level. In the activity, the students have to get used to the sound of the French language, and pick out a few key words that are the focus of the first lesson - greetings, “je m’appelle ...” (my name is...), etc. The activity is an introduction of the characters of the movie.

### **FRENCH BANDES DESSINÉES**

*La Bande Dessinée* (BD) is a French term that includes cartoons, comic strips, comic books, or - a more contemporary translation - graphic novels. BD is a traditional Franco-Belgian art form that mixes narrative and drawing to convey a story using sequential art or traditional comic strip format. Une bande dessinée (a BD) is a bound album printed in A4 format (the European equivalent of the letter format) with a hard cover and in color. In France, BDs are published in series – *une série BD* - sold in book stores and available in libraries. BDs cover all genres, not just comics, are a very popular and well-regarded art, *le neuvième art* (the 9<sup>th</sup> art). Many BDs have been adapted into movies--some animated movies as in the case of *Tintin*, some action movies (the Spielberg adaptation of *Tintin*) or adventure

movies (*Les Aventures Extraordinaires d'Adèle Blanc-Sec*), and many comedies (*Astérix et Obélix*). The movies are aimed at the general public.

The BD genre is well suited for the teaching of French as a FL because of the ways it provides access to French culture. It is an excellent support for communicative activities, and can be used to develop critical thinking skills. BDs are generally a good introduction to authentic multimedia documents because they mix verbal and non-verbal information in a printed format. The print format may help at the low levels of proficiency because the learner has control over the speed of processing. In a video, as was mentioned above, there is a high risk of cognitive overload if there is too much information to process in too little time. With BDs we have a similar multimodal effect as in movies or videos, in the sense that we have images that support textual information. The difference is that the audio is replaced by printed text, which in some cases can be easier to process. Printed scripts can be either helpful or unhelpful when working with videos. They can be helpful because they support verbal information with written information that the L2 learners can decode at his/her own pace. They can be unhelpful because students may rely on them too much and not process the auditory input of the video. Used wisely in classroom, printed text can effectively support audiovisual material. In combining BDs with movies, instructors have many more tools at their disposal to teach the four skills (reading, writing, listening and speaking) in French classes. They can use short movie extracts (2 or 3 minutes maximum) for listening and general comprehension activities. They can also use BDs for intensive and extensive reading activities.

## INTERMEDIATE FRENCH COURSES

*Les aventures de Tintin* is a classic series of Franco-Belgian BDs created 75 years ago. Originally, the Tintin BDs were published in a Belgian newspaper. They were later published in a bound album in their current BD format. The series is one of the first BDs to enjoy international acclaim. *Tintin* has been translated in over 40 world languages and even in several regional dialects, such as Corsican, Occitan, Basque, and Alsatian. Indeed, the success of *Tintin* has reached beyond Francophone countries and has been sold throughout the world--an estimated 200 million copies to this day. In 2011, Steven Spielberg and Peter Jackson combined several *Tintin* albums to create the blockbuster movie, the *Adventures of Tintin: the Secret of the Unicorn*, which will be included in the curriculum of this course.

*Introduction à la Bande Dessinée* (see appendix C) is an intermediate-level undergraduate French course I created for vocabulary development as well as the teaching of the four skills. The course presents high quality authentic material to ensure that students are entertained at the same time they learn French. This course would typically be for third year students who have already covered all the grammatical rules of the language. The goal of this course is to build on the students' basic knowledge of the French language, to review key language features using a focus-on-form approach, to build fluency using a communicative language teaching approach, to develop vocabulary, and to introduce sociolinguistic variation through movies and authentic multi-media documents, while keeping a focus on the four skills (speaking, listening, reading, and writing).

The course syllabus (see appendix C) is based on French BDs and their movie adaptations. The first module of the course (part 1 = weeks 1 to 5) is based on *Tintin*, the second module (part 2 = weeks 6 to 10) is based on '*Adèle Blanc-Sec*', and the final module (part 3 = weeks 10 to 15) is based on

students' choices of French BDs and related movies. For the first module (part 1), we will briefly look at the movie to generate interest, but we will use the BDs before actually watching the movie because the language in the BDs is easier than in the movie. For part 2, the *Adèle Blanc-Sec* module, we will do the opposite: watch the movie first and study the BDs afterwards. This will be done for the same reason: the language of the movie is easier to understand than the BDs. The authors of *Adèle Blanc-Sec* assume that the readers are native speakers, and that they are used to reading BDs. We will study this approach to the language of French BDs in more detail. The reason we will be studying *Tintin* before *Adèle Blanc-Sec* is because the former is generally easier to process and is likely to be familiar to students. The language in *Adèle Blanc-Sec* is a mixture of vernacular and non-standard French, which makes it more difficult for students who have had mostly classroom instruction in Standard French. In contrast, *Tintin* is written in Standard French; This is why Tintin BDs are easier for French Intermediate learners. I also will use the *Tintin* BDs to teach language learning strategies, which will be essential for the rest of the class.

Finally, the last 5 weeks of the course (part 3) will be negotiated by the teacher and the students during the first 10 weeks. Some classes during this period will be student-led following a 'teach-to-learn' approach inspired by Vygotsky's work. Students will take responsibility for entire lessons or parts of lessons. Students will work in groups and will present a BD series of their choice and/or a movie adaptation of a BD series. The instructor will add to the students' presentation when appropriate. For example, the teacher may provide an introduction to new vocabulary or a presentation of relevant background information before the new BD's presentation by the students, or, perhaps, a follow-up lesson with activities to complement the students' presentation and anchor new vocabulary and sociolinguistic knowledge.

## ADVANCED FRENCH COURSES

Use of authentic movies with advanced French students is seemingly limitless. If an instructor wants to teach sociocultural variation, for example, s/he can pick representative samples of movies and videos of actors speaking with regional accents and in various registers, such as *le parler jeune* (the way young people speak in France) ou *le parler des banlieues* (the way working class suburban people speak). Appendix D contains a course description and a syllabus of a French language course aimed at teaching sociolinguistic variation, especially regional variations, using authentic videos and movie extracts.

Appendix E gives ample details for an analysis of an interaction depicted in the French movie *Intouchables*. The interaction is analyzed relying upon insights from Speech Act Theory in pragmatics. The objective of the assignment illustrated in appendix E is to interpret speech acts across two cultures (French and American). This is the type of activity we can do as part of a sociolinguistics class, for example.

## CULTURA

As we have previously seen, intercultural competence is very difficult to teach because of difficulties in correctly identifying cultural differences. One way to discover these differences is to focus on practices that we might consider as being similar between two cultures. Cultura proposes a methodology<sup>17</sup> to work with French films and their American remakes. The website proposes a step-by-

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17 Cultura teacher's Guide - Introduction to the film module <http://cultura.mit.edu/community/index/cid/65>



step methodology that allows students to investigate how films, when transposed from one culture to another, might carry with them implicit, hidden cultural values and messages. Analyzing films and their associated remakes in another language allows students to deal with issues that are not obvious through text only--such as the different ways in which humor, suspense, oral discourse or body language might be interpreted.

For French students in the US, Cultura suggests focusing on *Trois Hommes et un Couffin* by Coline Serreau and *Three Men and a Baby* by Leonard Nimoy. The two movies lend themselves quite well to comparison because they follow the same chronology and present the same set of sequences (Furstenberg, Levet, English and Maillet, 2001). At first glance, they appear to be mirrors of each other, one made for a French audience and the other for an American audience (the characters have the same names; the scenes are almost all parallel, etc.) We can assume the changes have been made deliberately. This in turn allows students to try to understand the reasons for those changes, and how they might reflect some distinctive cultural traits, such as, for instance, in the way the French and the Americans interact with other (e.g., focus on proxemics).

Watching an original movie in the target language and its native language remake makes it much easier to notice the differences in the way people communicate with one another: both verbal and non-verbal communication. Many aspects of this communication are very intuitive and difficult to acquire for non-native speakers: how close/far French people stand from each other, their hand gestures, etc., the tone of conversations (frequent yelling, tone raising, the underlying aggression in many interactions, the lack of preliminary polite niceties, etc.), the body movements (the shoulder shrug), the touch or no-touch aspects of interaction, the interjections (e.g. *ouh la la*) and the chronemics

(structure of time, like the rule of thumb for dinner invitation of 10 minutes late in the US and 30 minutes in France, or the acceptable way people interrupt each other in France and the non-interruption communication style in the US).

The easiest way to proceed is to organize a viewing of the French movie followed by a viewing of the American movie. Students can then work in groups to identify and analyze the key differences. There are other tools that Cultura offers that can be used in conjunction with the movie activities, such as the word association questionnaires, the sentence completion questionnaires, the situation reaction questionnaires, and the discussion forums where French and American students share their perspectives with each other. Many of these activities rely on an e-tandem learning environment. Tandem language learning is a method of language learning based on mutual language exchange between tandem partners (ideally, each learner is a native speaker in the language the proponent wants to learn). For example, MIT in the US and INT (Institut National des Télécommunications) in France have set up electronic exchanges (e-tandem) between French learners of English at INT and American learners of French at MIT. Cultura does not provide partner schools. This is something that each instructor has to figure out on her/his own. Obviously, it is not always easy to find a professor and a university group of students in France who are willing to engage in such exchange. The way to deal with this limitation is to use the archives<sup>18</sup> on the Cultura web site. Appendix F gives an example of an activity that can be done with American advanced learners of French using the Cultura archives.

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18 <http://cultura.mit.edu/exchange/archive>

## Conclusion

I conclude this Master's Report polemically. The reality is that today most of the world speaks English. Even at the European Union, which was founded on linguistic diversity as well as on economic and political principles, the English language is progressively replacing multilingualism (Phillipson, 2003). Many of our students in American universities are learning French because they have a language requirement to fulfill or because they want to differentiate themselves from the many that are learning Spanish. Most students will never attain advanced proficiency levels during the few months they will spend in our classes. Perhaps their proficiency level in French does not matter that much in the grand scheme of their lives. What matters most is that they may leave our French language courses with new skills that they can use and enjoy for the rest of their lives.

Most of the educated adults that our students will meet for business or pleasure, in France or in other Francophone countries, speak English. French language skills are useful, but if an English speaker meets people with better English skills than his/her French skills, conversations will most likely be carried out in English. Movies are an excellent medium because they allow the teaching of so much more than the French language: the understanding of a foreign culture and intercultural competence.

Victor provides further support for the use of film in his LESCANT<sup>19</sup> model for international business communication. Victor has identified six areas other than language that can lead to potential

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<sup>19</sup> LESCANT is an acronym that stands for Language, Environment, Social Organization, Context, Authority, Non-Verbal, and Time. For more information, go to <http://laits.utexas.edu/lescant/page/about-lescant>

misunderstandings because they may differ so much in other cultures: our own way of dealing with our environment, our social organization, the context of a situation, the way we relate to people who have authority, non-verbal communication, and our sense of time. This is an excellent illustration of why it is important to learn language AND culture.

Using authentic multimedia documents like movies to teach French as a foreign language has several advantages. These documents provide extensive authentic input, which is essential for listening comprehension skills. Listening comprehension is probably the most important of the four skills in today's global world because Francophone native-speakers still use French to communicate among themselves. L2 learners may never need to produce French language to communicate with francophone speakers. However, they can listen to French native-speakers converse among themselves. It is not rare to have Franco-American business meetings where each participant will speak her/his native language and one or two of the participants will act as translators every now and again for those who do not fully comprehend certain parts of the conversation.

French visual material like video, graphic novels (BDs) and films are also a great resource to teach French culture in authentic contexts. Cultural skills are even more important nowadays because they are transferable. Intercultural competence is more useful than language skills in today's world where almost everyone speaks English to communicate with speakers of other languages. I believe that students who have been trained to analyze cultural gaps and misunderstandings--while learning French in authentic contexts--will be able to adapt these skills to other cross-cultural contexts. Not many of our French students will end up needing perfect language skills professionally. All of them will benefit from learning to "read" another culture even if they never leave their country.

The other advantage of learning French using authentic visual media is that it is a skill our students can enjoy as Francophile adults for the rest of their life. The sheer pleasure of watching authentic French movies can be the basis for lifelong learning, for pure entertainment and gratification. Movies are an escape from the ordinary. They take us away from our routine world. If we have used audiovisual media effectively in our classes, our students will be able take a lifelong journey into the imagination of French movie makers while improving their language skills.

## Appendix A

### Débuts. An Introduction to French

#### Evaluation of pedagogical material for vocabulary development

This pedagogical application is an evaluation of a first year French method called *Débuts* that relies on a French feature film. The focus of the evaluation is vocabulary development, more specifically a systematic review of the presentation, teaching, and assessment of vocabulary in an up-to-date textbook for foreign / second language learning.

*Débuts* is a 1<sup>st</sup> year French method used at Texas State University. The method is based on a movie *le Chemin du Retour* which is a 2-hour feature film for beginning French student. The language is simple but authentic and gets more and more sophisticated as the film progresses through its story line. It is split in 24 episodes, each episode corresponding to a chapter in the book. The narrative is about a young journalist and her pursuit of a family's secret about her grandfather's past during World War II. I like the film because it portrays real people who live in work in today's France, which brings a strong base for teaching French culture and because it is set both in the present and in WW2, which allows students to learn about this crucial part of French history and to understand its impact on people. Moreover, the suspense linked to the mysterious grandfather's adventures makes the method very interesting and fun both for the students and the teacher. The integration between the episodes and the textbook is very strong, which makes it easy for the teacher to address culture as part of the language learning process. The pedagogical approach is of communicative competence.

The Débuts method comprises the following ancillaries:

- a student edition,
- an annotated instructor's edition textbook,
- a Director's Cut DVD for the film (uncut 2-hour full-length movie),
- an instructional version of the film (a preliminary episode, twenty-two story episodes, and an epilogue)
- two Workbook/Laboratory Manuals (part 1 and 2) and an online version of these,
- two student Audio CDs
- an interactive CD-ROM
- a student viewer's handbook
- an instructor's Resource CD-ROM (audioscript, film script, instructor's manual, and testing program)
- an iTunes playlist of 24 authentic French songs, 4 of which are used in the textbook.

Vocabulary is one of the main focuses of the method. Each chapter contains a *vocabulaire* section, a *structures* section where the focus is on forms and grammar. In the vocabulary section, target words are grouped by theme and are presented in the context of the chapter, i.e. the context of the episode of the film. Words are illustrated with drawings and scenes from the movie. Explicit explanation about the target words is given in English with examples in French to illustrate the concepts. Sometimes, a glossary in English is provided for target words only. Other times, the entire vocabulary

section in French is translated in English. This is especially true in the first chapters of the book. It seems that fewer words are translated in the later chapters. It is clear that the authors of the textbook assumed the users of *Débuts* are English native-speakers because of the English translations and explanations. It looks like the book was written with the US French students in mind. The authors refer to the North American world, although *Débuts* could be used by other English speaking countries than the USA with very little modification.

The vocabulary, grammar and culture are interconnected and the teaching of the 4 skills is integrated. Everything is in the context of the story, or the characters.

The vocabulary section in each chapter contains some additional words that are not in the episode, but that are related to the theme. For example, the greetings section in the first chapter gives a good selection of the possible greetings in the French language, not just the few that were used in the first episode of the movie. Another example is the numbers vocabulary section that goes from 0 to 59 in the first chapter, and classroom vocabulary section that teaches the necessary words for a class. The first episode of the movie takes place on the first day of school in September, but there are many classroom related words in this episode. The way vocabulary is introduced via the movie and expanded in the textbook is very cleverly designed to follow a kind of meaning- focused instructional approach similar to the Omaggio-Hadley's proficiency-oriented<sup>20</sup> approach.

The type of vocabulary that is being taught in this method is the most frequent words. There is nothing exceptional about the vocabulary content of the lessons. If we compare the first chapter in this textbook with first chapters of other first year methods, we find the same words are covered: greetings, numbers, and classroom simple vocabulary. The way this method differs from other methods is the contextual vocabulary (movie words like actor, cinema, or character) and the small useful expressions of everyday life that are present in authentic dialog. There are about 60 to 80 target words per chapter. Some are related words, so they are not all new words. About 10 to 20 of them are passive words. All the others are encountered in the episode of the chapter and are practiced in the vocabulary activities.

After the vocabulary lesson (explicit instructions), there are a number of activities that promote vocabulary development. These are classic Focus-on FormS activities, although the sentences use the context of the story, so we could even define them as Focus-on-Form activities (Laufer, 2006). Some chapter counts 4 activities; others have several sub-sections of vocabulary with another 3 to 4 form-focused activities associated with it. These activities are a good way to ensure that students have explicit lexical instruction that address the intentional learning aspect of vocabulary. Additional, multiple output activities ensure a deeper processing of the target words, which is a step in the right direction towards the involvement load effect of the Involvement Load Hypothesis (Laufer & Hulstijn, 2001). In any case, it is obvious that the authors thought of vocabulary as an essential part of teaching and learning a language as vocabulary seems to have a prominent place in this textbook.

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<sup>20</sup> I used the textbook *Rendez-vous, An Invitation to French* by Muyskens, Omaggio Hadley, Duchesne, and Convert-Chalmers when I taught French at ACC Community Programs.

If we analyze the vocabulary section of the first chapter, we can see that several theories of language learning are addressed. For example, the attention of the learner is drawn to the forms of the language in such a way that the authors are forcing the learner to notice the patterns of the language (page 4 first chapter: What similarities do you notice between these two conversations?). This approach is congruent with Schmidt's Noticing Hypothesis (1990) that stated that a language feature cannot be acquired unless it has been noticed. This is the starting point of the learning process. Many more steps may be required before the word is known. Knowing a word involves many different things, from the meanings of the word, its register, some associations, its written and spoken forms, its collocations and being able to use the word correctly in output production (Schmitt, 2000).

At the end of each chapter there is a vocabulary recapitulation section that gives the list of the target words organized by theme, some English translation, and some additional words in the same category (related words: for example "dictionary" is a related word to the classroom vocabulary list). It is very important to also teach multi-word units, not just individual words (Nation, 2008). Another interesting feature of this textbook is the occasional functional language vocabulary words sections. In these, multi-word units that appear in the episode are taught.

To complement the listening (the episodes of the movie) and the speaking and writing (the textbook activities), there are reading activities in some of the chapters. The reading activities are alternated with cultural activities. Reading activities vary from general knowledge texts about the French language and the francophone world, some songs, poems, little history lectures and cultural information about the French society. At the beginning of each reading section, there are reading tips and strategies in English that teach how to read in the L2. For example, how to recognize cognates, words from a known word family, how to use visual cues to facilitate comprehension, understanding syntax and punctuation, guessing meaning from context, understanding structure of a song's lyrics, anticipating content, paraphrasing (this is not really a reading strategy in my opinion; it is a communication strategy used in conversation when the speaker does not know a word) etc. The culture sections talk about the francophone world, which is a tactic we see in recent editions of textbooks. Instead of focusing on France, we now see a lot of information on other francophone countries around the world. This is probably an attempt to promote the French language as the other lingua franca (the first one is English) and also to stress that French is spoken on all the continents in many countries.

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## Appendix B

### Tintin Lesson Plan French beginners class

This pedagogical application is a lesson plan that I developed in November 2011 as the Tintin movie I am referring to in this appendix just came out in Europe. The point of this appendix is to prove that it is possible to use authentic unedited French movie extracts with beginners' French students. This lesson was designed for students who never had any exposure in a formal classroom setting to the French language. The key is to use short extracts and to adapt the activity to the proficiency level of the students. In this case, the activity is about the typical sounds of the French language, greetings, and the Tintin movie itself.

The activities used in the lesson plan were on speaking and listening, which was the subject of this assignment in Fall 2011. The section the design of the lesson follows guidelines for a lesson plan that had to include a listening activity. The section on feedback contains information that I gathered after teaching this lesson in front of a group of my peers in the Methods of Teaching Foreign Languages (part 1 listening and speaking) class.

#### **DESIGN OF THE LESSON**

##### **A. Class Description**

This is a hypothetical French beginners class, first semester, first year, college level. The class meets twice a week (Monday Wednesday 6pm-8:30pm). There are 15 students mostly 16 to 25 years old, with a few exceptions of more mature students. The classroom arrangement is several rows of tables and chairs with a white board in front. There is a video projector system with pullout screen, a computer, and the equipment to hook up a laptop.

The class is based on the new Steven Spielberg movie *Les Aventures de Tintin: le Secret de la Licorne* (*The Adventures of Tintin: Secret of the Unicorn*) and on the Tintin French graphic novels/comic books. The movie was released in France and Belgium on Oct 26, 2011, one week before the USA, because of the enormous cult following Tintin has in Europe. Hergé, the author of the original books, was from Francophone Belgium.

The choice of Tintin for this class is very deliberate. Hergé wrote the stories for different publics. Children learning to read the books are able to understand the stories. Adults can read them too and enjoy them just as much. When you read these stories as an adult, you understand subtleties, puns and play on words that children do not get. You see the simple beauty of the language that you missed the first time you read the stories as a child. In other words, the books are both simple and sophisticated. They are a good fit for a college beginner's class.

There are many adaptations of the books on screen. The class is using a mix of extracts from the Spielberg animated movie, the previous adaptations, and the books. The Spielberg movie is an action movie that is very entertaining and attractive to young adults.

## **B. Timetable Fit**

This is the first lesson of the semester, but it is NOT the first 50 minutes of the first lesson. The teacher and the students have introduced each other. And exchange some personal information such as the students' motivational reasons for registering to this class. The rest of the lesson (2 ½ hour class) will be classic language teaching.

For the rest of this class and the following classes I plan to teach:

- More numbers
- The French alphabet
- Articles and nouns
- er verbs
- Negation
- être
- Descriptive adjectives
- avoir
- yes/no questions
- etc.

All of the above are taught in the context of Tintin. The whole semester is based on the adventures of Tintin.

## **C. Learning outcomes**

This lesson is an introduction to the French language as well as a pep talk for this class. At the end of this lesson, the students will be very excited, ultra motivated and eager to learn French in this context. Ideally I want them to go home and start researching Tintin and listen to the other material I will suggest at the end of the class.

The language objectives are for the students to be able to:

- recognize the sounds of the French language
- distinguish French from other languages
- introduce each other and ask for each other's name
- use greetings
- identify the characters of the story and a few things
- count to 20
- and pick some individual words in the movie trailer.

#### D. Activities

Activity	Interaction	Procedure	Time
French movie trailer Listen 1	Students work on their own	Teacher explains that Tintin is the context of class Students watch and listen trailer Feedback.	5min
French sounds	whole class activity	Teacher helps students pick French sounds Practice sounds as a whole group	2min
Greetings and introductions	whole class activity	Students repeat after teacher	3min
Speaking activity	Students work in pairs	Faisons connaissance	5min
Identify words in movie Listen 2	Students work on their own	Students watch/listen again and pick out individual words	5min
Trick (just for fun)	Before French movie extract: Students listen to other languages	Students should spot that the language is not French.	1min
Wrap up	Teacher answer questions	Goes through more words Formal/informal greetings	5min
Practice	Students work in pairs	Another handout tu/vous	5min
Counting	Students work with whole class Students work in pairs	Students repeat after Teacher Students practice in pairs	5min 5min
Counting	whole class activity	Play a number game	5min
Homework	Teacher assigns homework	T explain exercises Sts ask questions	5min

#### E. Problems and Possibilities

The design outlined above is planned for a 50min lesson. I am going to try to do as much as possible. I am going to speed up the lesson based on the fact that in reality I would have 15 students but in this exercise I will only have 5 or 6, and also because I would like to test the various listening activities. If I am running short on time, then I will cut the activities down.

If some of the students have finished before the others in the paired/group activities, they can look at the Tintin books that I have brought for them and familiarize themselves with the characters and the style of the stories.

## LESSON SLIDES AND NOTES

I used these slides for the 15 minutes teaching segment that I presented to my fellow Foreign Language Education students and on which I collected comments.

### Slide 1



Now we have introduced each other, let's start the lesson.

Au travail !

Bring several albums, in particular *le Secret de la Licorne* since the movie is based partially on it, circulate the albums among the students so they can touch and see for themselves.

Ask them if they know Tintin, let them share their personal experience with the comics, or what they know about them.

## Tintin: le film

- Who is Tintin?
- Les bandes dessinées: le neuvième art
- Steven Spielberg's movie
- *Les Aventures de Tintin : Le Secret de la Licorne*
- Learn French with Tintin
- Vocabulary and grammar in context



### Pre-listening activity: schema activation.

Have you heard about Tintin? What do you know about him? What does he do? Do you know the other characters? Is it just for kids? Do you know the movies or the comics? Show the books. Get them to speak about their knowledge of Tintin. Books were translated into many languages (show the English version of Tintin in America).

The teacher explains Tintin, the books, the cult following in Europe especially in France and Belgium, Hergé and la ligne claire, the new Spielberg animated movie, and the context of the whole class. We will study French using edited and unedited extracts from the books, from the new movie, and from older Tintin movies.

Spielberg bought the copyright in 1984 to adapt all the books. He read *the 7 Balls of Crystal* in 1981 when the first Indiana Jones movie came out because critics in Europe kept comparing the hero Indi to Tintin. He did not know Tintin and became a fan. New technology *performance capture* for animated movie gives very human-like movements. The new movie is very exiting for Tintin fans.

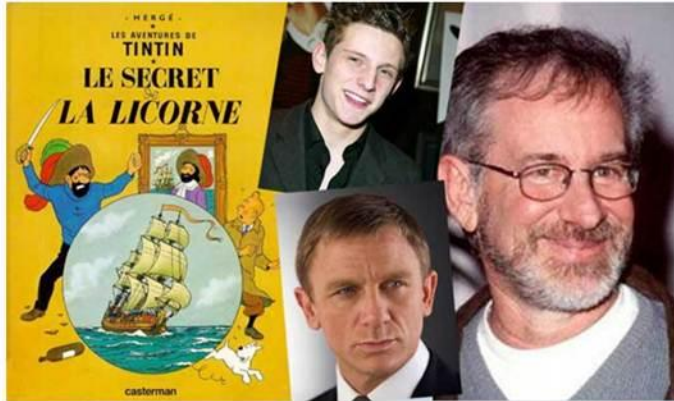
La bande dessinée is very big in France, it is an art in itself, a cross/blend between a book and a movie. It is a long tradition, in the 19<sup>th</sup> century humoristic cartoons, early 20<sup>th</sup> started to appear in newspaper. Today, it is a huge industry (le neuvième art).

Bande dessinée = literally drawn strip, Franco-Belgium comics (in Wikipedia), comic strip, comic book, graphic novel.

Slide 3

Watch, listen and enjoy

<http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=c-eDg963ID8>



**Recognition of French sounds.**

We are going to listen to the movie trailer of the new Spielberg animated movie *les Aventures de Tintin: le Secret de la Licorne* (*the adventures of Tintin: Secret of the Unicorn*). Like many French people, I have been a huge fan of Tintin since I was 8 years old. The movie was out this week in Belgium, native country of Hergé.

Movie trailer in French (2min15) <http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=c-eDg963ID8>

This first listening activity is to introduce the students to the sounds and rhythms of the French language. The students are not supposed to understand anything. This is essential as I do not want them to have unrealistic expectations. The movie trailer we are going to listen to is unedited authentic language. It is aimed at the French public.

Students are to just relax and enjoy the melody of the French language.


### Feedback slide 3

After the movie trailer, I ask the students if they picked out some sounds that do not exist in English, sounds that are close but not quite the same as English sounds, sounds that they have heard in other languages or that are close to other languages, and sounds that only exist in French.

### Slide 4

## Sounds of the French language

- Une aventure
- Tintin
- Milou
- Le capitaine Haddock
- Le secret
- La Licorne
- Dupont et Dupond



### Speaking Activity

We will practice all together the sounds in the following words.

Répétez s'il vous plait.

Read out loud the words on the slide. Act out to make sure they understand. Have them repeat.

## Faisons connaissance

- Bonjour
- Comment t'appelles-tu ?
- Je m'appelle Tintin



- C'est un bateau
- C'est la Licorne



### Speaking/Reading Activity

Répétez s'il vous plait.

C'est Tintin. C'est Milou.  
Et voilà le capitaine Haddock.  
Bonjour. Je m'appelle ...  
Comment vous appelez-vous ?  
Comment s'appelle-t-il ? Il s'appelle Tintin  
C'est un bateau. Le bateau s'appelle la Licorne  
Un trésor, un secret



## Vous parlez français ?

- Oui, je parle français.
- Non, je ne parle pas français.
- Pardon ?
- Je ne comprends pas.



### Paired activity - Faisons connaissance !

Répétez, s'il vous plaît.

Read the French text on slide 6, explain by acting out if possible (avoid translation into English).

Ask the students to repeat

Distribute the handout "faisons connaissance.docx" (see next section). Introduce the activity. Let them guess the meaning of the French words on the hand out.

They will practice the greetings and introduction phrases on the handout *Faisons connaissance*. This would take about 10 minutes

This is the Faisons Connaissance hand out for the paired activity in slide 6.

**PAIRED ACTIVITY - FAISONS CONNAISSANCE !**

**Complétez et répondez, s'il vous plaît ! Fill in the blanks and answer, please.**

- Bonjour.
- Je m'appelle ... Comment t'appelles-tu ?

*Hello. My name is... What is your name ?*



**Identifier les personnages s'il vous**

*Identify the characters.*

- C'est ...
- C'est ...

**Répondez aux questions, s'il vous plaît. Answer the questions please.**

**Vous parlez français ? do you speak French?**

**Comment s'appelle le bateau ? What is the name of the boat?**

**Comment s'appelle le film ? What is the name of the movie?**

slide 7

Comment s'appellent-ils ?



**Wrap up of the activity.**

Any questions?

Error correction, recast.

Review together using this slide.

Le chien s'appelle Milou.

Il s'appelle Tintin. Et lui, c'est qui ? Le capitaine Haddock.

C'est un bateau. Il s'appelle la Licorne.

Ecoutez.

- <http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=aYXwZZgn0X0>

**Listening Activity – fun little trick**

Recognition of the French language among other foreign languages.

<http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=aYXwZZgn0X0>

This extract is in Italian. I want the students to spot that it is the wrong language.

Nous allons écouter un extrait du film de Tintin et vous allez reconnaître des mots.

Now, we are going to listen to an extract from the Tintin movie.

See if you can pick out some words.

Start the video clips and watch students' reaction.

They should go "this is not French!" or "what is this?"

## Identify French words

- [http://www.allocine.fr/video/player\\_gen\\_cmedia=19255097&cfilm=49757.html](http://www.allocine.fr/video/player_gen_cmedia=19255097&cfilm=49757.html)



### Listening Activity - Recognition of isolated words

Listen to the following movie extract 1min10

[http://www.allocine.fr/video/player\\_gen\\_cmedia=19255097&cfilm=49757.html](http://www.allocine.fr/video/player_gen_cmedia=19255097&cfilm=49757.html)

This listening activity is another French movie trailer, similar to the first one, but it actually contains some of the words that the students practiced just before.

The objective is for the student to pick out some French words and/or phrases.

End of the lesson slides and notes.

## **REFLECTION AND FEEDBACK ON MY TEACHING THIS LESSON**

### **A. Use of the target language**

One of the comments I had was about the use of the target language, namely that I did not use enough French at the beginning of the lesson. I agree with this comment, but I deliberately chose to speak English at the beginning and to gradually start using more French after the first activity, that is after their first exposure to the language. This was to lower the anxiety level associated with the authentic French movie trailer which was quite a daunting task for a first activity. Additionally, a derived objective for this first lesson was for students to engage in collaborative metatalk about the sounds of the French language. I expected this to be carried out in English, and I wanted to point out that students were allowed to use their L1 in the class.

I understand the anti-L1 arguments and I agree with the benefits of the use of L2 as a primary source of input to maximize SLA in the classroom. However, I think the combined use of English and French in this class can stimulate collaboration and foster student-centered learning in a relaxed atmosphere. There are studies<sup>21</sup> which acknowledge the role for L1 use in the classroom to “reduce cognitive overload, sustain collaborative interaction, and foster the development of metalinguistic terminology” (Scott & de la Fuente, 2008, pp.109-110). I worry that prohibiting the use of the L1 in a novice’s level class is unnatural and anxiety-raising.

I want to promote an accessible model of competent French users in my classrooms, as opposed to the native-speaker model. A competent French user is a person who speaks French PLUS her native-language and possibly other languages as well. This relates to the idea of holistic multi-competence (Cook, 2008), which generally resonates with my teaching philosophy, because the multi-competent L2 user is a very realistic objective for late-starters French learners. The “competent French user” objective, as opposed to the native-speaker objective, is possibly the first step on the path of life-long learning of French (my fifth tenet).

Collaborative interaction is something I want to encourage as it is congruent with my student-centered teaching approach (third tenet in my teaching philosophy). Developing metalinguistic awareness for my students is also congruent with my teaching philosophy, particularly with the fifth tenet, which is to give them the tools so they can become autonomous life-long learners of the French language.

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<sup>21</sup> The article from Virginia Scott and Maria de la Fuente is a qualitative study that provides insight into the role of the L1 in the classroom for some form-focused tasks-based teaching. Scott and de la Fuente refer to multiple studies which challenge the arguments for 100% L2 use in the classroom. I have also read Cook’s views on multicompetent language use (<http://homepage.ntlworld.com/vivian.c/SLA/Multicompetence/MCEvidence.htm>).

## **B. Conclusion**

Overall, I feel that the activities and that the class dynamics were a good reflection of my teaching principles. The authentic input provided by the movie trailers accomplished my first objective of supplying extensive input to facilitate acquisition of the French language.

The activities were student-centered and I was able to engage the students quite well for a first encounter. I think everyone had fun and I could feel the excitement for the Tintin movie among the students. This means that I accomplished my third teaching philosophy tenet, namely to adopt a student-centered teaching approach in a relaxed atmosphere to maximize SLA and learning.

The Tintin context allows me to address the cultural tenet of my teaching philosophy because the comics are full of excellent cultural references. Some of the characters are fun stereotypes of some French personality traits, like the grumpiness of Haddock and the directness of Tintin. The story of the boat “la Licorne” entails interesting socio-cultural details about old aristocratic French families.

Tintin itself is also helping me to achieve my teaching principle of fostering a life-long learning of the French language among my students. I like the comics for the quality of the language and the multi-level reading that it allows. By multi-level reading, I mean that I read my first Tintin book when I was 8 years old and I understood and enjoyed it. I can read the same book today and still enjoy it. I can now grasp subtleties of the language that I could not when I was a child while laughing at the same pieces of tomfoolery, and marveling at the pictorial artwork. The Tintin comics are a great resource for learners of French of all levels, while being extremely entertaining. They open the door for many more experiences with the French language, from graphic novels which are huge in France and Belgium, to movies, to classic literature, and all aspects of pop culture accessible via the media and the internet.

I did not address my first teaching principle of delivering Form-Focused Instruction as part of a communicative language teaching approach because it was a first lesson and the focus was not grammar nor communication. It was simply to familiarize the students to the sounds of the French language.

## **References**

- Cook, V. (2008). *Second Language Learning and Language Teaching* (fourth ed.). London: Hodder Education.
- Scott, V., & de la Fuente, M. (2008). What's the Problem? L2 Learners's use of the L1 during Consciousness-Raising Form-Focussed Tasks. *The Modern Language Journal*, 92, 100-113.

## Appendix C

### Intermediate French Course Description and Syllabus

#### Introduction à la Bande Dessinée

This is an undergraduate intermediate level French class based on French graphic novels (bandes dessinées, or BD).

#### Part 1 : Les Aventures de Tintin



#### Week 1

Introduction to BD: the art form, the French and Belgian long tradition of BD, examples of different styles of BDs, the impact and popularity of BDs in French society, the festival d'Angoulême (famous convention), cinematic adaptations of BDs, importance of this type of art in the French and francophone world.

Presentation of the course: how we are going to use BDs to learn French, type of language used in BDs, introduction to French sociolinguistics and pragmatics, the movie Tintin, the adventures of Tintin in BD.

#### Week 2

Les aventures de Tintin: history of the BD, the author Hergé, the books, la ligne claire (style of drawing pioneered by Hergé), the characters, the many Tintin movies including the latest Spielberg adaptation

#### Weeks 3, 4 and 5

Lessons and student-centered activities on Tintin: There is a huge supply of authentic materials in French on the subject of Tintin. Here is a list of some French web sites:

<http://dardel.info/tintin/ListeAlbums.html> , this one gives the list of all the albums in the order of their publication



<http://www.tintin.com/index2.php>  
<http://www.tintin.free.fr/>  
<http://www.objectiftintin.com/>  
[http://users.skynet.be/tintinpassion/VOIRSAVOIR/Auto/Pages\\_auto/Auto\\_000.html](http://users.skynet.be/tintinpassion/VOIRSAVOIR/Auto/Pages_auto/Auto_000.html)  
<http://ydeb.free.fr/>  
<http://herald-dick-magazine.blogspot.com/2011/11/tintin-et-lheraldique.html>  
<http://www.naufrageur.com/>  
<http://tintinophile.xooit.fr/t31-Dessins-animes.htm?start=15>  
[http://bd.casterman.com/catalogues\\_list.cfm?CategID=805&OwnerId=436](http://bd.casterman.com/catalogues_list.cfm?CategID=805&OwnerId=436)  
[http://www.toutenbd.com/article.php3?id\\_article=763](http://www.toutenbd.com/article.php3?id_article=763)  
<http://www.free-tintin.net/>  
<http://www.pierretintin.ch/>  
<http://www.tintin.be/>  
<http://bellier.org/>

Additionally, there are many American websites,  
e.g.

<http://tintincomicsfreedownload.blogspot.com/>  
[http://www.ehow.com/how\\_7806284\\_read-tintin-comics-online.html](http://www.ehow.com/how_7806284_read-tintin-comics-online.html)  
<http://www.free-tintin.net/english/cinema.htm>

## Part 2: Les Aventures Extraordinaires d'Adèle Blanc-Sec



### Weeks 6 to 10

Adèle Blanc-Sec lessons and activities. Jacques Tardi, the author, the characters, the story line, a little history

Here is a list of authentic French language web sites on Adèle Blanc-Sec, which I would use to create activities for the students:

[http://fr.wikipedia.org/wiki/Les\\_Aventures\\_extraordinaires\\_d'Ad%C3%A8le\\_Blanc-Sec](http://fr.wikipedia.org/wiki/Les_Aventures_extraordinaires_d'Ad%C3%A8le_Blanc-Sec)

[http://bd-girls.mon-oeub.com/belles/adele\\_blanc\\_sec/index.phtml](http://bd-girls.mon-oeub.com/belles/adele_blanc_sec/index.phtml)

<http://blancsecadele.free.fr/menu.html>

[http://www.allocine.fr/video/player\\_gen\\_cmedia=19044547&cfilm=133917.html](http://www.allocine.fr/video/player_gen_cmedia=19044547&cfilm=133917.html)

<http://www.bedetheque.com/serie-177-BD-Adele-Blanc-Sec.html>

### Part 3: les bandes dessinées de votre choix



Weeks 11 to 15:

Here are examples of intermediate level BDs that students can chose to work on:

**Franquin, le Marsupilami**, which is both a comics series and a recent movie ‘Sur la Piste du Marsupilami’. Here are a few authentic resources for lesson material and activities.

[http://fr.wikipedia.org/wiki/Andr%C3%A9\\_Franquin](http://fr.wikipedia.org/wiki/Andr%C3%A9_Franquin)

<http://www.marsupilami.com/>

[http://www.franquin.com/marsu/index\\_marsu.php](http://www.franquin.com/marsu/index_marsu.php)

[http://www.lepoint.fr/cinema/sur-la-piste-du-marsupilami-hommage-a-franquin-03-04-2012-1447852\\_35.php](http://www.lepoint.fr/cinema/sur-la-piste-du-marsupilami-hommage-a-franquin-03-04-2012-1447852_35.php)

[http://archives.universcience.fr/francais/ala\\_cite/expo/tempo/franquin/marsu/index.html](http://archives.universcience.fr/francais/ala_cite/expo/tempo/franquin/marsu/index.html) movie trailer

<http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=ihAmRtOhy6M>

**Gaston Lagaffe**: another famous BD series, but no memorable movie apart from one in 1981, which did not reach the level of fame of the other BD movies mentioned here, and some small animated cartoons.

<http://www.gastonlagaffe.com/>

Multimedia material on gaston <http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=nOTdj-RxRCM>

1981 movie <http://lagaffemegate.free.fr/film/lefilm.htm> ,  
[http://www.allocine.fr/film/fichefilm\\_gen\\_cfilm=34482.html](http://www.allocine.fr/film/fichefilm_gen_cfilm=34482.html)

**Astérix et Obélix, from Goscinny and Uderzo:** this BD series is internationally famous and has been adapted a number of times to the cinema.

<http://fr.wikipedia.org/wiki/Ast%C3%A9rix>

The movies <http://www.asterix.com/index.html.fr?rub=français>

<http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=o4xrbJe1RHM>

<http://www.asterix.com/cinema/>

Asterix et Obelix contre César :

[http://www.allocine.fr/video/player\\_gen\\_cmedia=14539030&cfilm=14539.html](http://www.allocine.fr/video/player_gen_cmedia=14539030&cfilm=14539.html)

Asterix et Obelix au Service de sa majesté : <http://cinema.jeuxactu.com/news-video-asterix-4-la-bande-annonce-16024.htm>

Asterix et Obelix Mission Cléopâtre : <http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=hrjRiABIBSQ>

<http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=XlhCd6gtw> <http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=wtDBritgmKE>

**Spirou et Fantasio and le Petit Spirou**

[http://fr.wikipedia.org/wiki/Spirou\\_et\\_Fantasio](http://fr.wikipedia.org/wiki/Spirou_et_Fantasio)

There is no real movie on this BD, however there are several multimedia documents available on the subject. There are in fact 2 separate series which both have many albums

<http://www.bdcentral.com/Spirou/>

<http://www.spirou.com/spirou/accueil.php>

<http://www.spirouworld.com/>

**Les Schtroumpfs** (the Smurfs in English) which is quite easy reading since primary school children enjoy reading these albums and watch the animated movies

[http://fr.wikipedia.org/wiki/Les\\_Schtroumpfs](http://fr.wikipedia.org/wiki/Les_Schtroumpfs)

**Titeuf**, which is also fairly easy reading and which has several animated movies among which the latest in 3D

<http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=3mEJ979ZpGU>

<http://fr.wikipedia.org/wiki/Titeuf>

**Blueberry** <http://www.blueberry-lesite.com/>

and the Blueberry movie which is in English and quite good [http://www.wat.tv/video/film-blueberry-streaming-vf-4rarz\\_4m9eh\\_.html](http://www.wat.tv/video/film-blueberry-streaming-vf-4rarz_4m9eh_.html)

**Blake et Mortimer** [http://fr.wikipedia.org/wiki/Blake\\_et\\_Mortimer](http://fr.wikipedia.org/wiki/Blake_et_Mortimer)

**Aquablue** <http://www.bedetheque.com/serie-48-BD-Aquablue.html>

**Hauteville House**

For students who are more advanced, there are BDs which are more sophisticated, such as

[http://fr.wikipedia.org/wiki/Hauteville\\_House\\_\(bande\\_dessin%C3%A9e\)](http://fr.wikipedia.org/wiki/Hauteville_House_(bande_dessin%C3%A9e))

This series is based on Victor Hugo's home on [Guernesey](http://www.guernesey.com/) island: <http://www.hautevillehouse.com/>

**XIII**, the BD <http://www.treize.com/>

the movie <http://www.lecinema.ca/film/5248/> , <http://www.m6.fr/film-xiii/>

and the television series [http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/XIII\\_\(miniseries\)](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/XIII_(miniseries))

**Carmen Mc Callum** [http://fr.wikipedia.org/wiki/Carmen\\_Mc\\_Callum](http://fr.wikipedia.org/wiki/Carmen_Mc_Callum)

## Appendix D

### French sociolinguistics variations French Advanced Course

#### The REAL French language

This pedagogical application is an advanced French course description and syllabus. The course is based on movie extracts and videos all available on YouTube and a variety of French language web sites open to the public.

#### Course Description

This is an intermediate/advanced level French class for university level students of French. The class is open to students who have a minimum A2 (CEFR) or Novice High (ACTFL) proficiency level. For example, students who did French 1 and 2 at the university level, students who studied French in High School or in Middle School would be eligible to take this class, or heritage learners.

In this course, we will study authentic French documents that illustrate the diversity of the French language, with a definite focus on France. We will use an ethnographic, sociological, and socio-cultural approach to understand the ideology and values of various French language communities. We will discuss the sociolinguistic context of these documents by looking at the language from the point of view of its users. In other words, we will look at what people do with the French language in various francophone social contexts. This is not a sociolinguistics class but rather an illustration of sociolinguistics concepts applied to the French language. Sociolinguists study language as a social object. We will be doing this by studying authentic documents which illustrate sociolinguistic variations in the French language. We will review grammatical rules and key language features using a Focus-on-Form approach. You will expand your vocabulary by working on authentic documents, mostly multimedia (videos, movie extracts, etc.) Each audiovisual document is short (from less than a minute to a few minutes maximum) and represents a typical sociolinguistic concept (a regional variation, a social variation, a speech act, or other).

The main objective of this class is to build fluency in French while developing vocabulary, improving listening comprehension of authentic spoken French, read extensive authentic material related to the movies, authors, or sociolinguistics concepts you will be introduced to, and practice your oral skills. To do this, you will be exposed to the REAL French language as it is spoken today, using movie extracts, television and radio programs, internet videos, magazine and newspaper articles, songs, sketches, poems, and other media. There will be communication activities, conversations and group discussions, as we will be using a CLT (Communicative Language Teaching) approach.

Incidentally, we will have fun as many of the documents are comedy extracts. Let's not forget that "rire est le propre de l'homme" !

Next is a tentative course syllabus for the semester. The class will meet for a total of 3 hours per week.

## **Course Syllabus**

### **Week 1 - Introduction aux variations linguistiques**

This first lesson, we will get to know one another and we will have a mix of lectures and activities to make students reflect about language variations.

**Dissertation #1** : In this paper, you will describe your French language learning experience: what methods you have been exposed to, what textbook(s), what you thought of it/them, did you get a chance to meet French native-speakers, where were they from, how was this experience for you as a learner of the French language (1 to 2 pages maximum.) Please share any thoughts you have, any emotions you experienced and what are your objectives for learning French (do you want to teach French, travel, work in an industry where French is required or an advantage, etc.)

### **Weeks 2 to 5 - Les variations régionales du Sud de la France**

L'accent du Midi est très célèbre et il n'est pas stigmatisé autant que les autres accents régionaux.  
Le Sud-Est : les films de Marcel Pagnol. In this lesson, we will talk about Marcel Pagnol, his life, his novels, his films. We will read about his work, watch movie extracts, originals and remakes, and do some communication activities.

La Fille du Puisatier <http://www.marcel-pagnol.com/film-la-fille-du-puisatier,21.html>

César <http://www.marcel-pagnol.com/film-cesar,16.html>

Manon des Sources [http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=2eEhKc\\_acQ8](http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=2eEhKc_acQ8) (7 minutes, version originale)

Jean de Florette [http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=V44E\\_YanQsg](http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=V44E_YanQsg)

Manon des Sources <http://www.youtube.com/watch?feature=endscreen&v=BxScSXKXwPc&NR=1>  
(remake 1986)

L'accent du Sud-Ouest : Le Bonheur est dans le Pré [http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Lbk3YJd3\\_z0](http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Lbk3YJd3_z0)

Claude Nougaro : biographie et son œuvre <http://www.nougaro.com/> Ses Interviews radiophoniques.

Célèbre chanson de Nougaro : Toulouse <http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=jU8Tg1cRZhY>

Les paroles :

[http://www.parolesmania.com/paroles\\_claude\\_nougaro\\_62636/paroles\\_toulouse\\_1071435.html](http://www.parolesmania.com/paroles_claude_nougaro_62636/paroles_toulouse_1071435.html)

#### **Devoirs à la maison :**

lectures d'extraits des romans de Marcel Pagnol associés aux extraits de films que nous allons étudier en classe.

écoutez <http://www.ina.fr/ardisson/tout-le-monde-en-parle/video/I08239340/interview-psy-de-michel-galabru.fr.html>

lire les pages d'accueil et de présentation du site <http://accentsdefrance.free.fr/> et les pages sur la présentation de la Provence, le Languedoc, la Gascogne et la Corse.

lire <http://www.comlive.net/Avoir-Un-Accent-Du-Sud-Casse-t-il-Le-Charme,80285,57.htm>

<http://www.la-clau.net/revista/laccent-du-sud-est-il-credible-1000> <http://www.marseillais-du-monde.org/accent.php3> <http://projetbabel.org/forum/viewtopic.php?p=123234> et d'autres blogs ou

articles que vous pourrez trouver sur internet à propos des accents et en particulier l'accent du sud en France.

Réfléchissez et demandez-vous si vous préféreriez apprendre le français avec un accent, si oui avec lequel.

**Dissertation #2 :** Décrivez les stéréotypes des accents régionaux en France. Où aimeriez-vous habitez, dans quelle région/ville, pourquoi ? Imaginez votre vie là-bas. 1 à 2 pages.

### **Weeks 6 and 7 - Les variations régionales du Nord de la France.**

Bienvenue chez les Ch'tis <http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=SLRTtHByPn4> l'accent ch'ti.

Claude Vanony, l'accent et la patois Lorrain : <http://www.musicme.com/Claude-Vanony/>  
[http://www.dailymotion.com/video/xckmg8\\_claude-vanony-les-parisiens\\_fun](http://www.dailymotion.com/video/xckmg8_claude-vanony-les-parisiens_fun)

Le couarail : moment de bavardage entre amis, sur un banc...

On fait le couaroye, à la veillée (plutôt d'hiver) entre amis.

<http://iokanaan.net/blog/archives/000717.php>

[http://www.lexilogos.com/lorrain\\_langue\\_dictionnaires.htm](http://www.lexilogos.com/lorrain_langue_dictionnaires.htm)

Devoirs : lire <http://accentsdefrance.free.fr/> pour les régions du Nord (la Picardie, la Lorraine)

Lire le couarail <http://couarail.over-blog.net/>

### **Weeks 8 and 9 - Les variations sociales**

Les films de Robert Guédiguian. "Marius et Jeannette" (1997). Nouveau film (Nov 2011): "Les neiges du Kilimajaro". Ce film est du même metteur en scène, avec les mêmes acteurs principaux et toujours dans les environs de Marseille. C'est plein de chaleur humaine malgré un fond de difficultés économiques dans un milieu ouvrier, et avec des thèmes de syndicats, licenciement collectif, soutien entre personnes, jeunes déboussolés...

Review: [http://www.lemonde.fr/festival-de-cannes/article/2011/04/15/les-neiges-du-kilimandjaro-de-robert-guediguian\\_1507879\\_766360.html](http://www.lemonde.fr/festival-de-cannes/article/2011/04/15/les-neiges-du-kilimandjaro-de-robert-guediguian_1507879_766360.html)

Bande annonce: [http://www.allocine.fr/video/player\\_gen\\_cmedia=19255102&cfilm=179073.html](http://www.allocine.fr/video/player_gen_cmedia=19255102&cfilm=179073.html)

sur Netflix: [http://www2.netflix.com/Movie/The-Snows-of-](http://www2.netflix.com/Movie/The-Snows-of-Kilimanjaro/70189492?strkid=26258007_1_0&lnkctr=srchrd-sr&strackid=60ac1229a8886dcc_1_srl&trkid=222336)

[Kilimanjaro/70189492?strkid=26258007\\_1\\_0&lnkctr=srchrd-sr&strackid=60ac1229a8886dcc\\_1\\_srl&trkid=222336](http://www2.netflix.com/Movie/The-Snows-of-Kilimanjaro/70189492?strkid=26258007_1_0&lnkctr=srchrd-sr&strackid=60ac1229a8886dcc_1_srl&trkid=222336)

Les Deschiens, variations sociales et rurales, 'la France profonde'

[http://www.dailymotion.com/video/x2789u\\_les-deschiens-les-memoires-de-pouli\\_fun](http://www.dailymotion.com/video/x2789u_les-deschiens-les-memoires-de-pouli_fun)

[http://www.dailymotion.com/video/x27gts\\_les-deschiens-le-gibolin-profession\\_fun](http://www.dailymotion.com/video/x27gts_les-deschiens-le-gibolin-profession_fun)

Devoirs : lire <http://www.deschiens-et-compagnie.com/>

### **Week 10 - Les variations sociales**

le langage des cités <http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=sjTQAWfTFJQ>

<http://www.ina.fr/economie-et-societe/education-et-enseignement/video/1939891001026/le-langage-des-jeunes.fr.html>



le verlan <http://parismus.forum-actif.net/t93-le-langage-des-jeunes-francais-le-verlan>  
Chanson de Renaud « Laisse Béton » <http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=iC5eMh1FuaU>  
paroles [http://www.parolesmania.com/paroles\\_renaud\\_9473/paroles\\_laisse\\_beton\\_331395.html](http://www.parolesmania.com/paroles_renaud_9473/paroles_laisse_beton_331395.html)

Devoirs : lecture de l'article [http://www.scienceshumaines.com/tu-flippes-ta-race-batard-sur-le-langage-des-cites\\_fr\\_4808.html](http://www.scienceshumaines.com/tu-flippes-ta-race-batard-sur-le-langage-des-cites_fr_4808.html)

### **Week 11 - Le parler jeune**

Le Ciel, les Oiseaux et ta Mère  
[http://www.allocine.fr/video/player\\_gen\\_cmedia=15395030&cfilm=15395.html](http://www.allocine.fr/video/player_gen_cmedia=15395030&cfilm=15395.html)  
Entre les Murs <http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=t8HWJqgMAhU>

Devoirs: lecture d'un extrait du roman *Entre les murs* François Bégaudeau, paru en 2006.

### **Week 12 - Les variations sociales**

In French, hypercorrection is manifested in people adding the phoneme as an [ə] ending to most of the words, even those that do not end with a 'e'.

L'hypercorrection Kicekafessa "les derniers jours des soldes"  
<http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Er9SPI5oSVY>  
Les Aristos <http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=R2Wb9ZcufjA>  
Valérie Lemerrier dans les Visiteurs <http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=R2Wb9ZcufjA>  
[http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=TFAla8\\_0jTQ](http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=TFAla8_0jTQ)  
Valéry Giscard d'Estaing <http://www.ina.fr/media/petites-phrases/video/I00017840/valery-giscard-d-estaing-vous-n-avez-pas-le-monopole-du-coeur.fr.html>

Devoir : <http://www.ina.fr/art-et-culture/arts-du-spectacle/video/CAF91027674/valery-giscard-d-estaing.fr.html>

### **Week 13 - Concepts sociolinguistiques**

Some sociolinguistics theoretical concepts: Penelope Eckert's view of the 3 waves of variation study, concept of social semiotic system, indexicality through the use of variations by a particular group. Give the example of Labov Martha's Vineyard (1963).

Activity: start brainstorming for the assignment in small group (in French)

**Dissertation #3**: study the current social variation of the young population in French and establish a link between the variations and the definition of the social group using the variations. What is the symbolic value of the variations for this population?



### **Système de notation**

60% pour les dissertations, soit 20% pour chacun des 3 devoirs écrits. Chaque dissertation sera expliquée en classe. Vous aurez l'occasion de poser des questions et surtout n'hésitez pas à venir me voir si vous ne comprenez pas ce que vous devez faire ou si vous n'êtes pas sûr. Ma porte est toujours ouverte !

15% pour la présentation : en groupe de 2, choisissez un thème et faites une présentation de 15 minutes avec une activité communicative de 5 à 10 minutes. Le thème peut être un des thèmes listés au programme du cours, ou un thème de votre choix. Prenez rendez-vous avec votre professeur pour confirmer le thème et l'activité.

20% pour votre participation aux activités et aux discussions.

5% pour votre présence.

## Appendix E

### Advanced French Activity

#### Speech acts analysis

Here are the directions for this assignment :

**L'analyse de l'interaction** (Ethnographie, Ethnométhodologie, Acte de parole)

Pour ce travail, il faut analyser une interaction selon la tradition/approche discutée en classe (e.g., ethnographie, éthnométhodologie, Speech Act Theory/Acte de parole).

A. Pour l'éthnographie, il vaut mieux trouver un endroit ou une personne ou bien un groupe pour observer. La tâche est simple—prenez des notes des choses que vous trouvez intéressantes/pertinentes. Vous pouvez même interviewer des gens pour faire ressortir leurs idéologies. Ensuite, prenez une interaction observée et 'expliquez' cette interaction à l'aide de vos observations et vos nouvelles connaissances. Autrement dit, expliquez ce qui se passe dans l'interaction en termes « émic ». Si vous voulez, vous pouvez employer la rubrique de Hymes qui est décrite dans le texte de Wardhaugh (SPEAKING).

B. Pour l'éthnométhodologie, il faut trouver une interaction assez courte sur le site « Conversations mises à jour. »

C. Analysez l'activité conversationnelle, c'est-à-dire les tours de paroles, et/ou le développement du sujet et/ou la réparation des problèmes communicatifs. Il faut rester près des données, donc ne rentrez pas dans la psychanalyse ! Ces interlocuteurs, qu'est-ce qu'ils font ensemble ? Décrivez comment ils construisent ensemble leur interaction : action/réaction.

Pour l'approche Speech Act/Acte de parole, il faut trouver une interaction qui représente une catégorie bien connue (e.g., excuse, compliment, salutation). Analysez la séquence de l'interaction et isolez les parties obligatoires et facultatives. Suivez le modèle pour la salutation de Kerbrat-Orecchioni. Comment trouvez les actes de langage? Il faut être un peu malin. Vous pouvez éliciter les actes d'une façon secrète--par exemple, donnez des compliments et notez les réponses!

Next is my analysis of an interaction out of a French movie using the Speech Act Theory we studied in class (option C of the directions above). Additionally I am using an ethnographic approach to help with the analysis of the French utterances (option A of the directions).

In this paper I will be analyzing an interaction between three individuals in terms of speech acts. The interaction is a French movie extract from *Intouchables*<sup>22</sup>. This movie is interesting because it illustrates interactions between two people from opposite background and social classes which very rarely get into contact with one another in the real world. The characters of the interaction are a quadriplegic aristocrat and a young black man from the working class suburbs of Paris. In addition to speech acts and pragmatics explanation, I will be using an ethnographic approach to explain certain utterances. For the purpose of this assignment, we will pretend that this is a real conversation (unplanned speech in natural setting) and not a set of rehearsed movie scenes.

Please view the following extract to see the interactions explained in the tables below.

Extrait avec la Maserati Quattroporte

<http://www.youtube.com/watch?feature=endscreen&NR=1&v=nj8GQU7iWR8>

How to read the table :

1ère colonne = numéro d'énoncé, utilisé dans les explications supplémentaires.

2<sup>ème</sup> colonne = exact timing en secondes dans l'extrait Youtube

3<sup>ème</sup> colonne = interlocuteurs. A est l'employé. B est l'employeur paralysé. C est le voisin.

4<sup>ème</sup> colonne = analyse de l'interaction, explications supplémentaires après les tableaux.

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<sup>22</sup> [http://fr.wikipedia.org/wiki/Intouchables\\_\(film\)](http://fr.wikipedia.org/wiki/Intouchables_(film))

#	Time	dialogue	Speech act
1		A : Là, je ne rentre pas là-dedans, hein ! Même pour vous, je ne vais pas vous charger à l'arrière comme un cheval.	Constative utterance (makes a proposition true or false). Illocutionary act = directive
2	0.12	A : Et ça, c'est quoi, là ? B : Non celle-là, elle est beaucoup moins adaptée	Implicature
3	0.17	A : C'est-à-dire ?	Demande de clarification
4	0.17	B : C'est-à-dire que, malheureusement, il faut être pragmatique	Flouting
5	0.22	A : Pragmatique ?	
6	0.26	A : Oh (rire) putain ! Oh ça fait du bien, ça B : c'est bon ça, hein ? A : C'est bien ! Elle est nerveuse.	Compliment
7	0.38	A : Allez ! (rises)	
8	0.42	B : Ah ça c'est encore le voisin, il se met tout le temps là. Il est persuadé que c'est son parking, alors.	

### Additional explanations for speech acts

#1 According to Searle's classification of illocutionary acts (1976), this utterance would be a directive perlocution although it looks like a representative act. By stating (representative) the negative utterance, the speaker (A) is using the utterance to get the hearer (B) to do something, namely to allow A not to use this car, and eventually to let him use the other car, the Maserati Quattroporte.

#2 There is an implicature in the question because the question implies an unstated proposition that there is another car that A would prefer to use.

#4 B is flouting one of Grice's conversational maxims (1975): the maxim of Relation. The answer to the question "c'est-à-dire" seems not relevant to the conversation. B is making the implicature that he cannot use a sport car because of his handicap. Unfortunately, A does not seem to be able to make the inference (#5)

#6 This utterance is not really an insult. It is a phatic expression to express A's admiration. These utterances are compliments about the car. « Hein » indicates a turn-point. It is also an empathic signal from B to request feedback from A. A executes the feedback request with the "c'est bien".

## Parties obligatoires et facultatives

There are very few mandatory parts to this conversation. Here is a shorter version of the interactions in the movie extract which includes only the mandatory parts:

- A : Je ne rentre pas là. Et ça ?  
 B : Non, elle est beaucoup moins adaptée.  
 A : C'est bien.  
 B : C'est encore le voisin. Il se met tout le temps là.  
 A : Lis-là, lis tout.  
 C : Emplacement réservé.  
 A : T'imprimes et tu dégages !

## Interaction Continued

Additional explanations for the speech acts follow the table.

	Time	dialogue	Speech act
	0.55	B : Ah, ça va peut-être changer, là.	
0	0.57	C : Avec une émulsion de foie gras	(Il parle au téléphone)
1	0.57	A : Bonjour. Ça va ?	Salutation/greeting
2	0.58	C : Quoi ?	flouting
3	0.59	A : je vous dérange pas ? Patrick Juvet, tu veux un café ?	Flouting Passage au « tu »
4	1.05	A : tiens fais voir ça ?	Passage de la séquence d'ouverture au cœur de la conversation.
5	1.06	C : quoi ?	Repair act
6	1.07	A : viens là, viens là.	Request/order
7	1.12	A : vas-y, lis là, lis, lis.	Request/Order
8		C : prière de pas stationner	Il exécute la demande
9	1.13	A : Plus fort. J'entends pas.	Request. Mensonge, ironique.
0	1.14	C : Prière de pas stationner	Il obéit, il exécute la demande, il répète
1	1.15	B : c'est la bonne méthode, ça.	

2	1.15	A : lis tout. Lis tout. C : emplacement réservé A : voilà. Maintenant t'imprimes, t'imprimes, et tu dégages.	summons = do not park here anymore response to the summons summons/requests = remember for the future, and go away
3	fin	A : Alors hop ! Vas-y, casse-toi, casse-toi.	Séquence de clôture, farewell request = move, go away
4		A : Patrick Juvet, vas ! Casse-toi !	Insult

#11 Salutation proprement dite + salutation complémentaire (question rituelle).

A meeting between strangers requires a different kind of greeting than the ones used here. This greeting is typical of friends and acquaintances because of the ritual question “ça va”. It does not fit in this conversation. The tone violates the cooperative principle of this conversation because of its inappropriate register (too informal) and therefore does not benefit mutual understanding. Moreover, A is interrupting C's phone conversation, which adds to the flouting effect of the utterance.

#12 Pas de symétrie de la salutation. “La salutation initiative doit en principe être suivies d'une salutation réactive (ne pas répondre a une salutation constitue un affront) : l'échange est binaire, et symétrique » (Kerbrat-Orecchioni, 2001, p. 111).

This locution is flouting the maxim of Relation because this question seems irrelevant. The logical utterance should be a salutation to respond to the previous salutation (adjacency pair). The initial salutation was flouting. Consequently it is logical that the response is also flouting one of Grice's maxims.

#13 A is using “vous” at first and then switches to “tu”. This is because A is playing a game with C. The questions are ironic and flout the maxim of quality because A is not truthful. The second part of the utterance is a kind of insertion sequence because it seems completely unrelated to this conversation. It is in fact pure humor. A is introducing himself as Patrick Juvet, an old pop star, and is offering a coffee as if the two interlocutors were friends. It totally violates the cooperative principle of the conversation. The humorous effect is culturally loaded and relies on the hearer to know who Patrick Juvet is (see footnote on P.Juvet). A takes on an effeminate tone of voice to imitate P.Juvet who speaks in a very soft feminine voice. The two utterances are part of the game/role play that A is playing (ethnographic explanation).

#15 In conversation analysis terms, this question is technically an *other-initiated repair* since it is interjected by the listener (C) in an attempt to have some clarification. Turn-switching is not typical of a smooth conversation here.

#16 D'après Kerbrat-Orecchioni (2001), il n'y a pas de frontière claire entre cet acte de langage et le précédent. Pas de souplesse ni de malléabilité de l'activité conversationnelle.

#17 this is a summons. The next utterance (#18) is the response to this summons (adjacency pair). There are clear preference agreements in these utterances: C is complying with the entire summons A is making. Agreement is the preferred choice; hence the conversation is able to proceed without disruption (chaining effect) to the flow, although the tone is clearly confrontational. This

illustrates the social feature of sequences in a conversation, as opposed to the psychological aspect of this interaction (threatening).

#20 C is being called upon to speak via these orders that A is giving him. There is no need for cues to signal a transition relevant place for turn-taking. Turn-taking is clearly signaled by A's utterances. In ethnographic terms, it is interesting to note that this is not a correct utterance in French. It should be "prière de ne pas stationner". Technically C is not reading; He is telling A the meaning of the road sign at the entrance of the building and he using a vernacular register (dropping the "ne" part of the negation).

#23 no symmetry, no politeness. This is something that we can see throughout this second interaction: There is no concern for face nor politeness at all. This is not a typical conversation where both participants negotiate turn civilly. A is choosing his words carefully but this is not showing decent language behavior.

#24 Patrick Juvet is an insult here. In ethnographic context, this is because the speaker is from a generation and a social class that has totally different values than the social group who appreciates Patrick Juvet<sup>23</sup>. P. Juvet is not a positive role model and he is been made fun of by young people today. For the speaker, calling someone "Patrick Juvet" is equivalent to calling him an old-fashioned, effeminate cute boy, and a loser.

This is an extreme conversational setting that keeps violating cooperative principles of conversation. There is an asymmetry of power with A giving orders and C executing them. The overall goal of this exchange is successful since C does exactly as he is told.

## References

- Grice, H. P. (1975). Logic and conversation. In P. Cole & J. L. Morgan (Eds.), *Syntax and semantics 3 :Speech acts* (pp. 41-58). New York : Academic Press.
- Kerbrat-Orecchioni, C. (2001). *Les actes de langues dans le discours* (pp. 110-121). Paris, France: Nathan.
- Searle, J. R. (1976). The classification of illocutionary acts. *Language in Society*, 5, 1-24.

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<sup>23</sup> Wikipedia: **Patrick Juvet** (born 21 August 1950, [Montreux, Switzerland](#)) is a former [model](#) turned [singer-songwriter](#), who had a string of [hit records](#) in [France](#). While his early career was focused on making [pop](#) records, he found international success as a [disco](#) music performer in the latter half of the 1970s.

## Appendix F

### Advanced French activity based on Cultura archives

#### Analysis of cultural concepts *work/travail*

This is an analysis of the cultural model for the concept of *work/travail*, using the results from the 'work/travail' archives (<http://cultura.mit.edu/exchange/archive>) available from the Cultura website (<http://cultura.mit.edu/>).

Here are the directions for this activity:

#### **L'analyse des concepts culturels.**

Pour ce travail, il faut analyser les données du site Cultura.

- A. Choisissez des mots (e.g., success, réussite) et analysez les résultats lexicaux américains et français pour deux classes.
- B. Selon les données, faites un prototype américain et français. Ensuite, discutez les résultats.
- C. Résumez les deux concepts (américain et français) en propositions suivant le modèle de Blyth 2012.

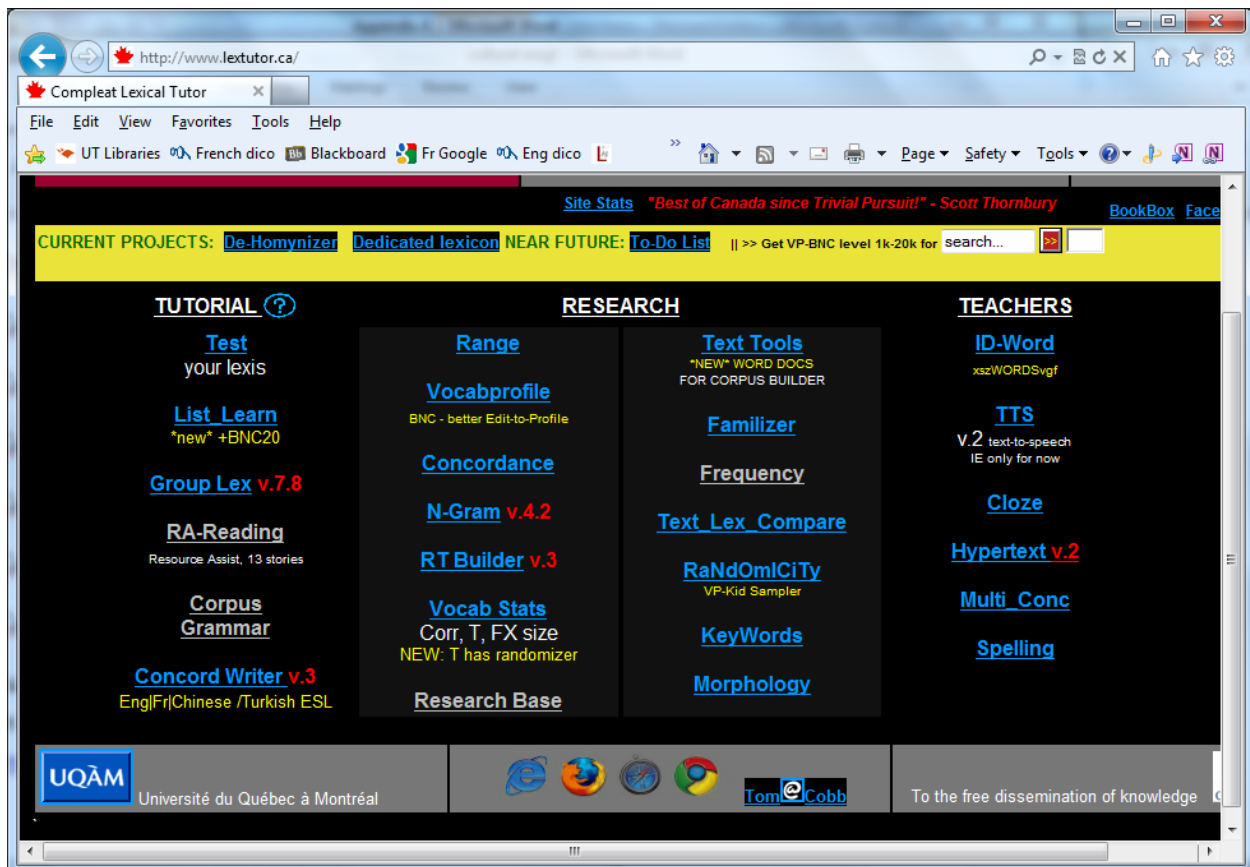
#### **Lexical Association Methodology**

The data for the lexical associations was extracted from the following 8 forums (classes):

- Cultura Fall 2011 MIT/Université de Brest  
([http://cultura.mit.edu/answerArchived/view/question\\_id/4086](http://cultura.mit.edu/answerArchived/view/question_id/4086) )
- Enseirb-Matmeca -- Stonybrook 2011  
([http://cultura.mit.edu/answerArchived/view/question\\_id/3959](http://cultura.mit.edu/answerArchived/view/question_id/3959) )
- Cultura Spring 2011 - MIT/ENSEIRB-MATMECA  
([http://cultura.mit.edu/answerArchived/view/question\\_id/3932](http://cultura.mit.edu/answerArchived/view/question_id/3932) )
- Cultura Fall 2010 - MIT/Université de Brest  
([http://cultura.mit.edu/answerArchived/view/question\\_id/3783](http://cultura.mit.edu/answerArchived/view/question_id/3783) )
- Cultura spring 2010 - MIT/ENSAM Lille  
([http://cultura.mit.edu/answerArchived/view/question\\_id/3632](http://cultura.mit.edu/answerArchived/view/question_id/3632) )
- Cultura Fall 09 - MIT/Université de Brest  
([http://cultura.mit.edu/answerArchived/view/question\\_id/588](http://cultura.mit.edu/answerArchived/view/question_id/588) )
- Cultura Spring 09 - MIT/Université de Brest  
([http://cultura.mit.edu/answerArchived/view/question\\_id/281](http://cultura.mit.edu/answerArchived/view/question_id/281) )
- Cultura Biz ([http://cultura.mit.edu/answerArchived/view/question\\_id/192](http://cultura.mit.edu/answerArchived/view/question_id/192) ).



The American lexical association set contained 574 words and the French set contained 609 words<sup>24</sup>. After grouping the French and American data into a big table, I used the Frequency tool provided in Compleat Lexical Tutor<sup>25</sup> (second column in the Research area, see print screen below) to analyze the word frequency. Blyth 2012 used the AntCorc and the Wordle.com software to do this part of the analysis.



<sup>24</sup> This is a very large set of data. The exercise can be done using only two forums. It would be a much easier data set to manipulate and yet it would be enough to see trends across the two cultures.

<sup>25</sup> The tools used for this analysis were web-based and free. The French side of Lextutor still needs work, but it looks promising. The reason why I used Lextutor is because it is often cited in the foreign language literature as a corpus, concordance, frequency, and a general lexical aids set of tools. I studied the story concordancer of Lextutor (<http://www.lexutor.ca/bouledesuif/>) in another assignment.

I, then, copied and pasted the English column in the table into the English Web Frequency Indexer of Lextutor (<http://www.lexutor.ca/freq/eng/>). The print screen below illustrates the results of this step.

Text: Untitled  
 Date: 3/18/2012 21:15  
 Tokens: 748  
 Types: 288  
 Ratio: 0.3850  
 Sort: descending

RANK	FREQ	COVERAGE indivd cumulative	WORD
1.	165	22.06% 22.06%	•
2.	49	6.55% 28.61%	MONEY
3.	13	1.74% 30.35%	HOURS
4.	13	1.74% 32.09%	TIME
5.	12	1.60% 33.69%	BORING
6.	12	1.60% 35.29%	CAREER
7.	12	1.60% 36.89%	HARD
8.	12	1.60% 38.49%	JOB
9.	10	1.34% 39.83%	NECESSARY
10.	9	1.20% 41.03%	DIFFICULT

Same list but with extractable word column (for extracting list of freq>x)	
1.	165 •
2.	49 MONEY
3.	13 HOURS
4.	13 TIME
5.	12 BORING
6.	12 CAREER
7.	12 HARD
8.	12 JOB
9.	10 NECESSARY
10.	9 DIFFICULT
11.	8 EFFORT
12.	8 TIRED
13.	7 LONG
14.	7 REWARDING

Following the Blyth 2012 model, I kept the words that had at least 5 tokens and copied/pasted the list into an Excel spreadsheet (appendix C). The English list is on the left of the spreadsheet. The second column of the table (freq) is the number of token. The list is organized in decreasing order with the most frequent word at the top and the least frequent at the bottom. I removed the first rank which was a dot (I copied the bullets from the word association lists extracted on the Cultura web site).

I reproduced the process for the French word association data in the right column of the data. This time, I copied/pasted the French data into the French Lextutor word frequency tool (<http://www.lexutor.ca/freq/fr/>). I copied/pasted the result of the French frequency lists were saved into the left table of the Excel spreadsheet alongside the English results on the right table (appendix C).

Again, I discarded all the words that had less than 5 tokens, hence the French table in the spreadsheet is comparable to the French data Blyth 2012 used as input into AntConc and Wordle.com.

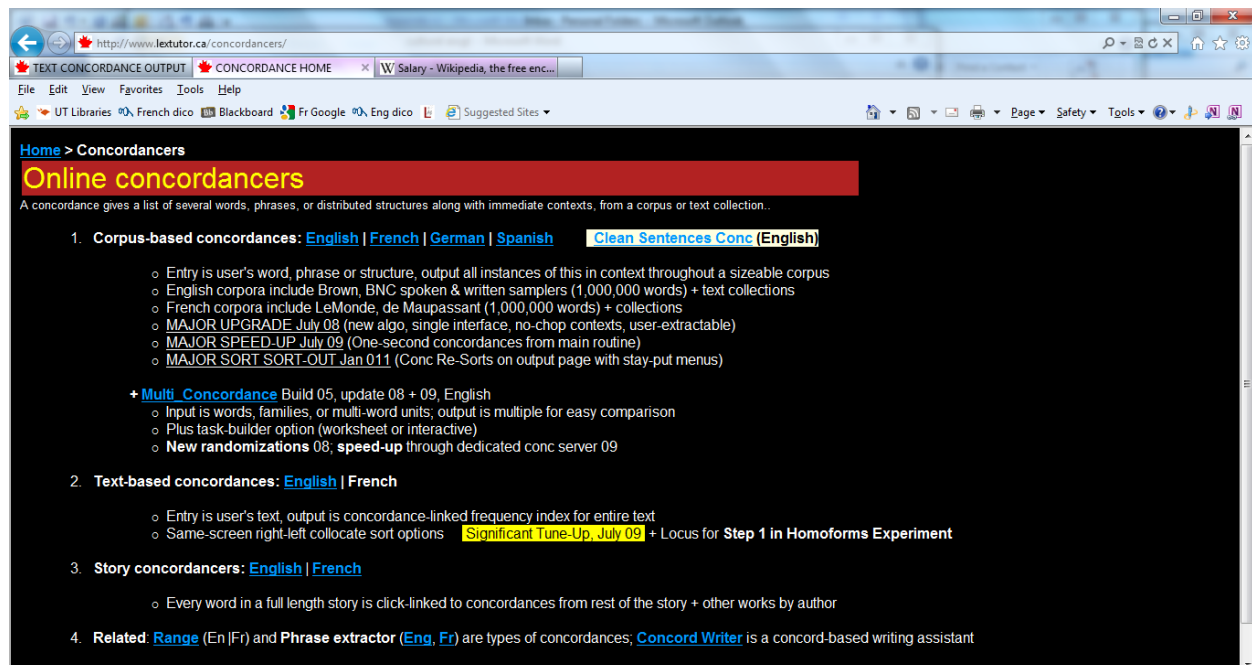
## **Bilingual Discussion Concordance analysis**

I understand that the assignment was to do a lexical analysis using the word associations only. The following section is focused on the analysis of the bilingual discussions, which is outside the scope of this assignment. I found that the data in the bilingual discussions helped validate my lexical association hypothesis. I extracted bilingual discussions data from 7 forums (the Enseirb-Matmeca -- Stonybrook 2011 forum did not have any discussion data). To analyze the bilingual discussions, I separated the text into 2 files: one for the English discussions and one for the French discussions.

I did a concordance analysis using one of the online Concordancers available on Lextutor (<http://www.lexutor.ca/concordancers/>) for the English discussions and using AntConc for the French discussions. The input of the text concordances came from the same forums as the lexical associations:

- Cultura Fall 2011 MIT/Université de Brest  
([http://cultura.mit.edu/answerArchived/discussionPost/question\\_id/4086/topic\\_id/2047/exchange\\_id/306](http://cultura.mit.edu/answerArchived/discussionPost/question_id/4086/topic_id/2047/exchange_id/306))
- Enseirb-Matmeca -- Stonybrook 2011  
([http://cultura.mit.edu/answerArchived/discussionPost/question\\_id/3959/topic\\_id/1370/exchange\\_id/295](http://cultura.mit.edu/answerArchived/discussionPost/question_id/3959/topic_id/1370/exchange_id/295))
- Cultura Spring 2011 - MIT/ENSEIRB-MATMECA  
([http://cultura.mit.edu/answerArchived/discussionPost/question\\_id/3932/topic\\_id/1410/exchange\\_id/294](http://cultura.mit.edu/answerArchived/discussionPost/question_id/3932/topic_id/1410/exchange_id/294))
- Cultura Fall 2010 - MIT/Université de Brest  
([http://cultura.mit.edu/answerArchived/discussionPost/question\\_id/3783/topic\\_id/838/exchange\\_id/274](http://cultura.mit.edu/answerArchived/discussionPost/question_id/3783/topic_id/838/exchange_id/274))
- Cultura spring 2010 - MIT/ENSAM Lille  
([http://cultura.mit.edu/answerArchived/discussionPost/question\\_id/3632/topic\\_id/730/exchange\\_id/241](http://cultura.mit.edu/answerArchived/discussionPost/question_id/3632/topic_id/730/exchange_id/241))
- Cultura Fall 09 - MIT/Université de Brest  
([http://cultura.mit.edu/answerArchived/discussionPost/question\\_id/588/topic\\_id/553/exchange\\_id/94](http://cultura.mit.edu/answerArchived/discussionPost/question_id/588/topic_id/553/exchange_id/94))
- Cultura Spring 09 - MIT/Université de Brest  
([http://cultura.mit.edu/answerArchived/discussionPost/question\\_id/281/topic\\_id/343/exchange\\_id/52](http://cultura.mit.edu/answerArchived/discussionPost/question_id/281/topic_id/343/exchange_id/52))
- Cultura Biz  
([http://cultura.mit.edu/answerArchived/discussionPost/question\\_id/192/topic\\_id/303/exchange\\_id/45](http://cultura.mit.edu/answerArchived/discussionPost/question_id/192/topic_id/303/exchange_id/45)).

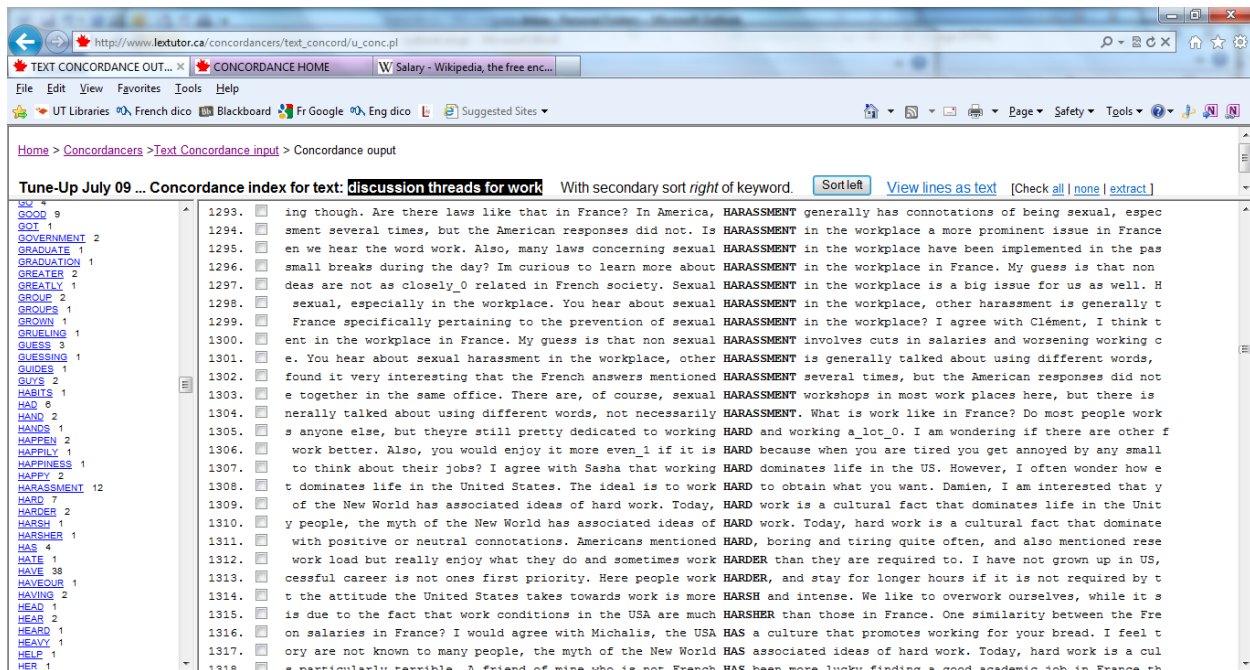
I separated the English discussions and the French discussions into two distinct files. I used the English discussion file as input for the Lextutor Text-based Concordancer for English (see option 2 on print screen below.) I used the French discussion file as input for AncConc because Lextutor does not offer a French Concordancer (I'll talk about this later).



The concordance text output on the Lextutor text-based concordancer is organized on 2 columns: the left one is a list of words with the number of tokens associated with each word, the right one is the actual concordances. By scrolling up and down the left column, I could see that some content words (prepositions, adverbs, articles have many tokens but they can be ignored) had some interesting concordances associated with it.

When looking at the concordances, I paid particular attention to ones that contained the following content words: France, French, jobs, life, money, participate, passion, positive, US and USA, work, and working.

The screen below shows the concordances for ‘harassment’. The word came up because of a recent news item in France at the time the discussions were taking place. An unusual high number of suicides at France Telecom were being reported in the press. Students used the term “harcèlement” when reporting the event; hence the Americans translated it as “harassment”. This generated many discussion threads which I feel are somewhat irrelevant to this exercise since what we are looking for is general statements that characterizes the cultural concept of *work*, as opposed to punctual news-related statements. I used this approach to ignore words or multi-word units that seem closely linked to the students’ world (e.g. school, study, summer job) in order to keep the cultural model broader than a cultural model for *work* in a students’ environment.



The French Lextutor text-based concordancer is not available at the moment and I do not know why. Is it being built? It looks like it is planned since the user interface lists English and French (option 2 <http://www.lexutor.ca/concordancers/>). I tried using the French phrase extractor (option 4). This would have been a nice alternative since it is supposed to extract phrases from a number of words that the user specifies (2 to 5), but it kept crashing. I finally used AntConc to analyze the French discussions (see print screen below) using a simple text version of appendix E.

I read the concordances for the most interesting content words following a similar methodology as with the English discussions in the English Lextutor Text-based concordancer. This also allowed me to compare AntConc and Lextutor. I understand why Blyth 2012 used Wordle.com in addition to AntConc. It is because AntConc does not give any frequency information. Wordle.com does this part of the work, whereas I used the Frequency tool of Lextutor.

AntConc 3.2.4w (Windows) 2011

File Global Settings Tool Preferences About

Corpus Files

French discussion

Concordance Concordance Plot File View Clusters Collocates Word List Keyword List

Hit	KWIC	File
1	sommes toujours ainsi? le sujet du harcèlement au travail est assez important en France. Est-ce qu'aux US a	French discussions.txt
2	rquer que français et américains considéraient le travail comme une contrainte. Est-ce que le travail aux E	French discussions.txt
3	nt le travail comme une contrainte. Est-ce que le travail aux Etats Unis est toujours considéré comme une n	French discussions.txt
4	vec Anne-Laure, je trouve que nous considérons le travail comme une contrainte alors que nous y passerons l	French discussions.txt
5	on parle plus de harcèlement moral que sexuel au travail: <a href="http://vosdroits.service-public.fr/F2354.xhtml">http://vosdroits.service-public.fr/F2354.xhtml</a> E	French discussions.txt
6	a aucune loi en France qui interdit la mixité au travail, loin de là. Personnellement j'avais cette idée a	French discussions.txt
7	t. Avez-vous des idées sur comment fonctionne le travail en France, l'organisation, les méthodes de travi	French discussions.txt
8	ravail en France, l'organisation, les méthodes de travail etc ... ? D'après moi, le harcèlement moral (non	French discussions.txt
9	t consister en la détérioration des conditions de travail ou même des relations au travail entre le patron	French discussions.txt
10	es conditions de travail ou même des relations au travail entre le patron et l'employé ou même entre employ	French discussions.txt
11	emandés étaient trop importants, les relations au travail avec les autres moins sympathiques, beaucoup de s	French discussions.txt
12	aires avec le harcèlement moral. Pour changer de travail, je pense que cela dépend du marché du travail. S	French discussions.txt
13	de travail, je pense que cela dépend du marché du travail. S'il y a beaucoup de chômage, il est sans doute	French discussions.txt
14	et aussi les inégalités hommes/femmes est lié au travail. Je pense qu'il est très important en France de s	French discussions.txt
15	s important en France de spécifier ces aspects du travail car nous sommes très attachés aux conditions de t	French discussions.txt
16	l car nous sommes très attachés aux conditions de travail. Autrement dit, la façon de travailler, l'environ	French discussions.txt
17	nous travaillons est aussi important qu'avoir un travail. Un exemple simple, pour beaucoup de français les	French discussions.txt
18	our moi je crois qu'on a trop tendance à associer travail et labeur, on peut d'ailleurs le voir dans les ré	French discussions.txt
19	penser ainsi, de ne pas voir autre chose dans le travail. Aux Etats-Unis y a-t-il c'est même croyance, ce	French discussions.txt
20	même croyance, cette même vision de l'homme et du travail ? Je suis d'accord avec Eloi, je trouve que nous	French discussions.txt
21	cord avec Eloi, je trouve que nous considérons le travail comme une corvée alors que c'est le lieu où les f	French discussions.txt
22	e temps ! Je pense aussi que le harcèlement au travail est surtout du harcèlement moral et non pas sexeu	French discussions.txt
23	e celui-ci existe ! Sans parler des conditions de travail, beaucoup de gens travaillent sous la pression af	French discussions.txt
24	lient-ils sous la pression ? Adam, notre mode de travail évolue beaucoup en France: <a href="http://www.lefigaro.fr">http://www.lefigaro.fr</a>	French discussions.txt
25	sentie harcelée ni écrasées par des conditions de travail difficiles, mais peut être est ce différent dans	French discussions.txt

Search Term ☒ Words ☐ Case ☐ Regex

travail

Concordance Hits 84

Search Window Size 50

Start Stop Sort

Total No. 1

Files Processed

Reset

Kwic Sort

☒ Level 1 1R ☒ Level 2 2R ☒ Level 3 3R

Save Window

Exit

### **American cultural models for work**

The first positive word in the word frequency English list (see appendix C) is 'rewarding' which had 7 tokens and is at the 14<sup>th</sup> rank. All the other words from rank 2 to 14 have a negative connotation. The only positive words in the entire list are enjoyable (5 tokens), interesting (6 tokens) and rewarding (7 tokens), and money the first one. This implies that *work* is mostly a negative concept for Americans. One student in the discussion threads mentioned the dilemma "work to live but not live to work". This is a good illustration of an essential part of the cultural model for work: work takes most of your life for most Americans. This is a huge difference in the cultural models between the French and the American concept of *work*. I will illustrate this later.

An attempt at defining the cultural model for *work* could be:

- One has to work to make money
- Work is hard but necessary
- Work is the central part of the American way of life.

### **French cultural models for travail**

Conversely, most words in the French frequency word list are positive or neutral. Another difference is with regards to money. Argent is at the top, just like money for the American list. This is not surprising; everyone on both sides of the Atlantic knows that one has to work to make some money. The French make more references to the concept of money since there are 84 tokens for argent/salaire/rémunération, compared to 55 tokens for money/salary for the Americans. The difference is in the association between money and the concept of working itself. In salaire/salary or rémunération, there is the notion of getting compensated for the work the employee produces, whereas argent/money do not carry any link to the concept of work itself. This makes me think of the proverb «à toute peine mérite salaire», which illustrates the concept of a financial reward for work.

This is understandable if we step back and look at the French society itself. In France, there are many ways to get money without producing an actual work. The newer generations are very aware of this as it dominates the public debate and has done so for a decade at least. One French student illustrates the issue with this discussion thread: « Il existe encore une autre vision du travail qui n'a pas été évoquée dans nos réponses et ça me rassure ! En effet, dans nos banlieues, "grâce" au système français, les gens qui ne travaillent pas ont énormément d'aides financières, trop certainement ! Il n'est pas rare de rencontrer des familles où aucun des parents ne travaillent, et ils ne cherchent à travailler car avec toutes les aides qu'ils ont, ils gagnent parfois plus que dans une famille où les deux parents travaillent. Lorsque j'étais à l'école maternelle ou primaire, j'avais des amis qui étaient dans ce genre de situation : les parents ne travaillent pas, les enfants mangent GRATUITEMENT à l'école le midi, chaque enfant de la famille à sa propre télé dans sa chambre, ils ont toutes les dernières consoles, tous les derniers jeux vidéos, des supers voitures ..... Et moi mes parents travaillaient dur pour que l'on mange, qu'on ait deux télévisions en tout dans la maison et une console de jeux !!!!! Il est vrai que les aides financières dans le système français c'est quelque chose de positif par rapport au système américain, mais cela entraîne un changement de certaine mentalité qui est très nocif pour la société. »

I think that the government interventions are very present in French people's lives. The financial aids that the government distributes permeate many aspects of society, including the French concept of *travail*. For the French, working is not about surviving; it is about enjoying life (*épanouissement*, 13 tokens, 3<sup>rd</sup> most frequent word). This is quite abstract, like one student pointed out ("en France nous avons une façon de penser assez abstraite). Indeed, the ideas generated in the French discussions tend to be quite philosophical, compared to the American words that were down to earth and practical. For example, the concept of "*épanouissement*" itself reflects an abstract notion associated with a certain feeling of happiness, internal peace, and accomplishment, hence a more abstract, metaphorical, and philosophical dimension to the cultural model of *travail*, compared to the American cultural model of *work*.

When you analyze the discussion threads it is very apparent that the French are proud of their "*acquis sociaux*"<sup>26</sup>. A French student explains the historical background of this: « Notre histoire est en partie basée sur le fait que nous nous sommes soulevés face aux patrons : la révolution française, les luttes ouvrières, mai 68, etc. Nous avons gagné énormément de droits. Donc notre vision du travail est utopiste : moins de travail et plus d'argent. » Again, this permeates the concept of *travail* to the point that it is difficult to talk about work in France without mentioning the 35-hour week, the RTT<sup>27</sup>s, the retirement age (55 or 60), etc. It was interesting to see in the discussion threads are the French students were conscious of the privileges that the French society has given them. This is not representative of the French culture in general. A majority of the French people does not know what labor laws and regulations outside France are. As a result, most French people take the *acquis sociaux* as a given and a norm.

Indeed, the French students who participated in the Cultura exchange are savvy as to what the American and the French differences are in the work environment. It is interesting to note, however, that many American students discovered the French work environment. For example, in the sentence completion task "What France needs most", one American answer was "40 hour work weeks", and another was "overtime", and in the sentence completion task "What the US needs most", one American answer was "... more free time and fun for its citizens", others were "chill out", "to take a deep breath". One possible interpretation would be that many Americans students were struck by the 35 hour French work week and the polemic around the retirement age in France. This was seen as a great divide between the two countries. I would like to add that no one raised the issue of paid vacation (1-2 weeks in the US versus 5 weeks and up with the RTTs in France). This would have undoubtedly generated many exchanges between the two communities and it would have made the interactional samples even more salient in terms of reaffirming the differences between the 2 cultural models.

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<sup>26</sup> The '*acquis sociaux*' is a broad term referring to the advantages and the social guarantees of the French with regards to their work related environment that have been introduced usually for a long time and that are taken for granted now. They include but are not limited to the 35-hour week, the paid vacations, and the retirement age.

<sup>27</sup> The concept of *Récupération du Temps de Travail* (RTT) is linked to the 35 hour week laws. In France if you work more than 35 hours per week, you are entitled to days off. As a personal anecdote, when I was a product manager at IBM in the US in 2001, my French counterpart had 9 weeks of vacation that year, where I only had 2. Our jobs were extremely similar in terms of a typical work week, salary, and responsibilities.



An attempt at defining the cultural model for travail can be as follows:

- A toute peine mérite salaire
- Le travail doit être épanouissant
- Le travail n'est pas la chose la plus importante dans la vie.
- Work is financially compensated
- Work must be life-enriching
- Work is not the most important thing in life.

In conclusion, I would say that the French and the Americans have two very different cultural models for *work/travail*, if not opposite for certain values such as how much one should work. These differences stem back from history and political contexts in the two countries and have evolved over the generations into deep values. The French

I would like to point out that the French cultural model for *travail* is currently challenged by the economic crisis. The political campaign<sup>28</sup> carried out at the moment is illustrating the internal conflicts the French society is undergoing. On one hand, the candidates to the right and centre droit (middle) are generally advocating that the French work more and longer (later retirement age) and on the other hand, the left wing candidates are absolutely not budging from the current position and are defending the 'acquis sociaux' and pushing them further. The opposing views can be caricatured as:

- Travailler plus pour gagner plus, on the right,
- On ne touche pas aux acquis sociaux, on the left.

It would be interesting to see how the French cultural model for *travail* evolves over the next few years. How is the French cultural model of *travail* going to survive in a tough economic environment? Are the French going to work harder and longer? Is the French way of life going to change? We will see...

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<sup>28</sup> Campagne Présidentielle 2012 <http://www.2012-presidentielles.com/>  
<http://www.tv5.org/cms/chaine-francophone/info/France-2012/p-19111-election-presidentielle.htm>

## Glossary

BD	<i>Bande Dessinée</i> French graphic novel, or comic strips, literary drawn strips.
CLT	Communicative Language Teaching Language teaching methodology that emphasizes authentic communication in the target language.
DCT	Dual Coding Theory Theory of cognition by Alan Paivio based on two distinct channels for verbal and non-verbal (visual imagery) information creating two separate representations for information in the mind
FIA	French in Action Pierre Capretz famous French methodology based on a TV series.
FIM	French in Motion Another method by Capretz
FoF	Focus-on-Form Concept in second language acquisition and language education, proposed by Michael Long, in which, in the context of a communicative interaction, the attention of learners learning a second language is drawn to the form of specific language features
FL	Foreign Language The language that is taught.
GI	Guided Induction Method of language teaching that starts out the students analyzing language data in context to extract patterns and induce a rule
IE	Input Enhancement Concept in language education in which the instructor make selected features of a second language more salient for learners in such a way as to facilitate acquisition
LC1	Native languaculture, or the languaculture you are born into. Languaculture is a term invented by Michael Agar which means a language and which includes not only elements such as grammar and vocabulary, but also past knowledge, local and cultural information, habits and behaviors

LC2	Target Language culture, or the language culture you are learning
L1	Native language, or the language who grew up speaking
L2	Target language, or the language that is being taught or learned L2 also means second language, which is sometimes distinguished from foreign language. Second language refers to language learning or teaching within the country where the target language is spoken.
SLA	Second Language Acquisition Scientific discipline devoted to studying the process by which people learn a second language (foreign language or target language)

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## **Vita**

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